

FULL  
68 PAGES

AMAZING STORIES



NO  
70

# Sinister TALES

14



Al  
Williamson



# FLASH GORDON

## AND THE SENTRIES OF DARK MOUNTAIN

BY AL WILLIAMSON & ARCHIE GOODWIN

THEIR ROCKET WRECKED ON MONGO'S LOST CONTINENT, FLASH, DALE AND ZARKOV SET OFF INTO THE VAST UNKNOWN LAND, SEARCHING FOR A PATH TO THE SEA...



SINISTER TALES No. 70

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AS THE STRANGE WINGED MENACE  
SWEEPS CLOSER, FLASH FIRES AT  
THE CREATURE'S  
VULNERABLE  
UNDERSIDE...

GOT  
HIM!

DALE!  
ARE YOU ALL  
RIGHT? DARLING  
SPEAK TO  
ME...

THIS IS  
**SERIOUS!**  
COULD BE A  
CONCUSSION!

DOC, THESE MEDICAL PACKS  
FROM THE ROCKET AREN'T  
ENOUGH TO TREAT DALE! WE  
NEED MORE--DOC? ZARKOV,  
WHY DO YOU KEEP STARING  
AT THAT THING?

BETTER  
TAKE A LOOK,  
FLASH...

...THIS  
CREATURE  
WAS **MAN-  
MADE!**

IT'S SOME KIND OF  
INCREDIBLY LIFE-LIKE  
AND COMPLEX ROBOT!  
ANYONE WHO COULD  
CREATE SOMETHING  
LIKE **THIS** WOULD  
BE SURE TO HAVE THE  
KIND OF MEDICAL  
SUPPLIES WE NEED  
FOR DALE...

IT CAME FROM  
THAT DIRECTION, WHERE  
THE TALL DARK MOUNTAIN  
IS...IT'S WORTH A TRY  
TO SEE WHAT I  
CAN FIND!

I'LL TAKE  
CARE OF DALE,  
BUT HURRY.  
THE MEDICINE  
WE HAVE WON'T  
LAST LONG!





AND ON TOP OF THE MOUNTAIN, HIDDEN BY LOW RIDING MISTS...

THE SCANNING SCREEN'S STILL BLANK! SOMETHING'S HAPPENED TO SENTRY NO. 5!

I WARNED YOU, THURLON. THOSE THREE DID NOT LOOK LIKE BARBARIANS. THEY HAD THE MEANS TO FIGHT THE SENTRY. WE SHOULD HAVE STUDIED THEM MORE...



...ESPECIALLY THE TALL BLOND ONE! HE WAS MOST INTERESTING!

OUR DUTY HAS ALWAYS BEEN TO GUARD THE PASS THROUGH THE DARK MOUNTAIN... WITHOUT EXCEPTION! THEY MOVED WITHIN THE PERIMETER... I WAS ABOUT TO ORDER THE SENTRY!



THERE! THE SECOND STAGE WARNING... ONE OF THEM IS ON THE MOUNTAIN. BUT ONLY UNTIL I SEND OUT THE NEXT SENTRY.



I MUST HAVE BEEN RIGHT ABOUT THIS PLACE...THIS IS A DEFINITE TRAIL...BUT IT'S OLD, WORN AWAY IN SPOTS. COULD BE DANGEROUS, ESPECIALLY WITH THAT MIST COMING DOWN...HARDER AND HARDER TO SEE WHAT'S AHEAD...



THEN, LOOMING OUT OF THE ENSHROUDING MIST AND FOG...

ANOTHER ONE! UGLIER THAN THE LAST!







THIS MUST BE  
THE ROBOTS' HANGAR...  
LOOKS MORE LIKE A  
MUSEUM OF HORRORS!  
THEY SEEM TO HAVE  
BEEN DESIGNED AS  
MUCH TO FRIGHTEN  
AS HARM...

THE DOOR!  
SOMEONE'S  
COMING!



MAYBE I  
CAN GET TO  
THE BOTTOM  
OF THIS,  
RIGHT...



...NOW!  
WHAT TH--  
WHO ARE YOU?  
WHAT'S GOING  
ON HERE?

I AM RHEA,  
GUARDIAN  
OF THE  
SENTRIES...



JUST WHAT ARE YOU AND THE  
SENTRIES SUPPOSED TO BE PRO-  
TECTING? WHY WERE MY FRIENDS  
AND I ATTACKED?

WE PREVENT  
THE PASSAGE OF  
STRANGERS INTO THE  
ELDER LAND BEYOND  
THE MOUNTAINS. IT  
IS OUR HERITAGE,  
WE HAVE ALWAYS  
DONE SO...



WERE YOU  
AND WHO  
EL--

TELL HIM  
NO MORE!





HE IS MORE HANDSOME THAN HE APPEARED ON THE SCANNER... I WAS RIGHT IN HAVING THE SENTRY BRING HIM IN!

YOU WERE FOOLISH, RHEA, AND YOU REVEALED TOO MUCH OF OUR PURPOSE. THE ELDERS WOULD NEVER APPROVE! BUT... ONE SHOT AND IT WILL NO LONGER MATTER!



THE ELDERS NEVER CHECK ON US ANYMORE! WE CAN DO AS WE PLEASE! I WON'T LET YOU KILL HIM! I WON'T! GET AWAY!

YOU NEVER SHOWED SUCH CONCERN FOR ME! NEVER LOOKED AT ME AS YOU DID HIM... YET YOU KNOW I'M THE ONLY ONE FOR YOU! YOU KNOW IT, RHEA!



MAYBE YOU DIDN'T HEAR THE LADY!



SO, RHEA! YOU THINK HE WILL CARE FOR YOU... SEE HOW MUCH HE CARES WHEN HE LEARNS YOU SENT OUT MORE SENTRIES TO DESTROY HIS FRIENDS!



IS THAT TRUE? YOU SET MORE OF THOSE MONSTERS ON DALE AND ZARKOV!

MY ONLY INTEREST WAS YOU! THERE WAS NO REASON TO FORSAKE MY DUTIES FOR THE OTHERS! YET, PERHAPS THEY CAN STILL BE SAVED, IF...



IF WHAT, RHEA?

IF YOU AGREE TO STAY HERE WITH ME AND FORGET THE OTHERS!



MEANWHILE, AT THE BASE  
OF THE DARK MOUNTAIN...

NO USE! CHARGES  
ARE GETTING WEAK...  
RAY BLASTER WON'T  
HOLD IT OFF MUCH  
LONGER!



DALE! ZARKOV!  
THEY HAVEN'T A  
CHANCE! I'LL DO  
WHATEVER YOU  
WANT...CAN YOU  
STILL SAVE  
THEM?

OF COURSE!  
A SIMPLE MATTER  
OF FLIPPING THE  
DESTRUCTO-SWITCH  
FOR THAT PARTICULAR SENTRY...

BUT BEFORE RHEA'S FINGER CAN HIT THE  
SWITCH, A RAY GUN BLAST RIPS PAST HER  
SHOULDER INTO THE CONTROL PANEL...



WHAT ARE  
YOU DOING?!!



Y-YOU'VE BLOWN OUT  
THE ENTIRE CONTROL PANEL!  
ALL THE SENTRIES ARE  
DESTROYED...HOW CAN  
WE GUARD THE PASS  
WITHOUT --

I MADE A PROMISE  
TO YOU, RHEA, AND I'LL  
KEEP IT, BUT THIS IS  
THE ONLY WAY I COULD  
BE SURE YOU'D NEVER  
SEND ANOTHER  
OF THOSE  
THINGS AFTER  
MY FRIENDS!



AND IN THE SENTRY  
CHAMBER...

THIS IS THE  
TREACHERY OF THE  
ONE RHEA PICKED  
OVER ME! EVERY  
MIGHTY SENTRY  
DEMOLISHED...IN  
RUIN! EXCEPT  
ONE!







AS FLASH STARTS HIS  
DESPERATE CLIMB, RHEA  
SUDDENLY TURNS...

RHEA! COME  
BACK WHAT'RE  
YOU DOING?

GOT TO  
REASON WITH  
HIM... THURLON!  
STOP! PLEASE!  
I'LL FORGET  
HIM, I'LL--

BUT THE GIRL IS  
UNNOTICED IN THE  
EARTH-SHATTERING  
PATH OF THE  
ADVANCING  
MONSTROSITY...

...UNTIL IT IS TOO LATE!

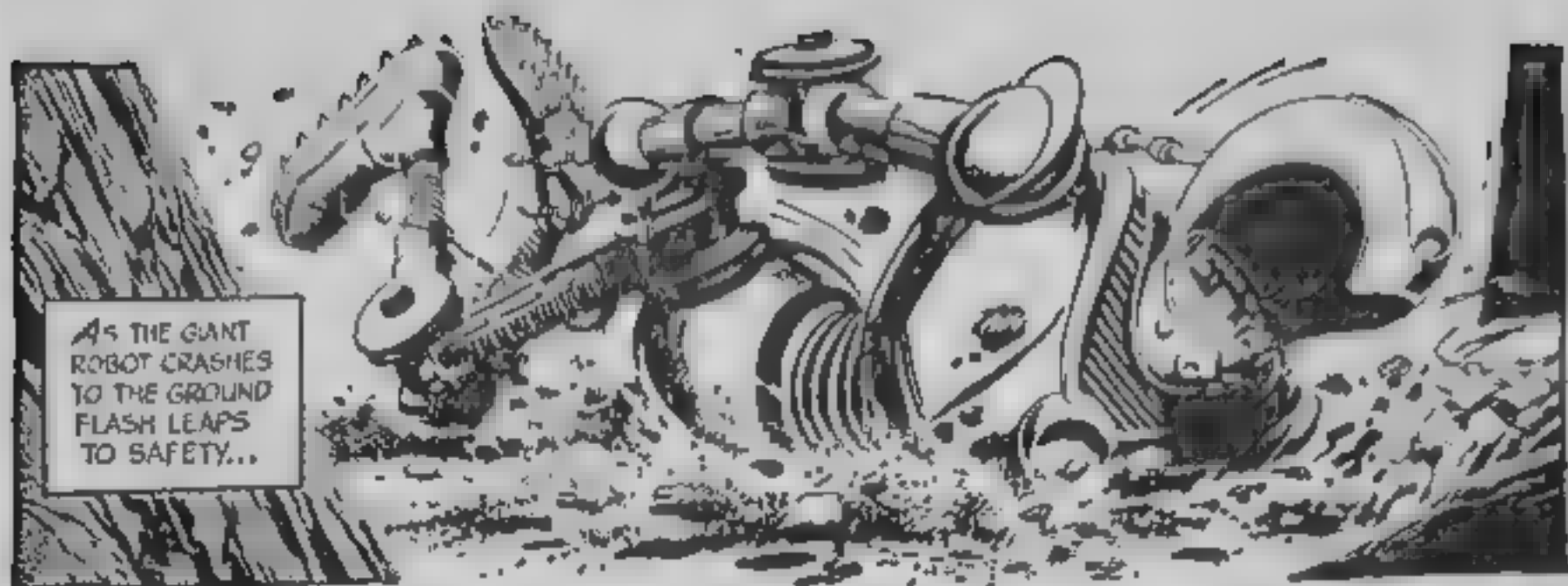
RHEA!  
NO! NO!

AND FLASH HAS THE CHANCE HE NEEDS...

SILENTLY AND FIERCELY THURLON AND FLASH  
BATTLE AS THE STEEL BEHEMOTH STAGGERS  
AND REELS UNCONTROLLED...

WE KEEP SLAMMING  
EACH OTHER INTO THE  
CONTROLS! ANY MINUTE  
THIS THING MAY  
TOPPLE...





AS THE GIANT  
ROBOT CRASHES  
TO THE GROUND  
FLASH LEAPS  
TO SAFETY...

FOR A TIME THERE IS SILENCE THEN THE SOUND  
OF THURLON'S LAST WORDS BRINGS FLASH NEAR...



RHEA RHEA...  
UHHHHHHH ..

GREAT TAO! NO WONDER  
THEY BOTH FELT SO  
STRONGLY ABOUT THE  
SENTRIES... KEPT AT  
THEIR JOBS EVEN  
WHEN THERE  
DIDN'T SEEM  
MUCH USE IN  
IT ..



...THEY'RE BOTH  
ANDROIDS THEM-  
SELVES! THE ONES  
THEY CALLED 'ELDERS'  
MUST HAVE BEEN  
THEIR CREATORS.  
PROBABLY DIED  
OUT YEARS AGO,  
MAYBE EVEN  
CENTURIES  
AGO...

.. BUT THEY  
WERE PROGRAMMED  
TO MAINTAIN THE  
SENTRIES, SO THEY  
JUST KEPT ON LONG  
AFTER THERE WAS  
NO NEED! POOR  
RHEA, POOR  
THURLON...



THESE MEDICAL SUPPLIES  
YOU BROUGHT US DID THE  
TRICK, FLASH. DALE WILL  
BE FINE IN A FEW DAYS.  
FIND ANYTHING ELSE  
UP THERE?

A PASS  
THROUGH  
THE MOUNTAINS  
THAT MAY LEAD  
US TO THE  
SEA...

NOTHING  
ELSE?

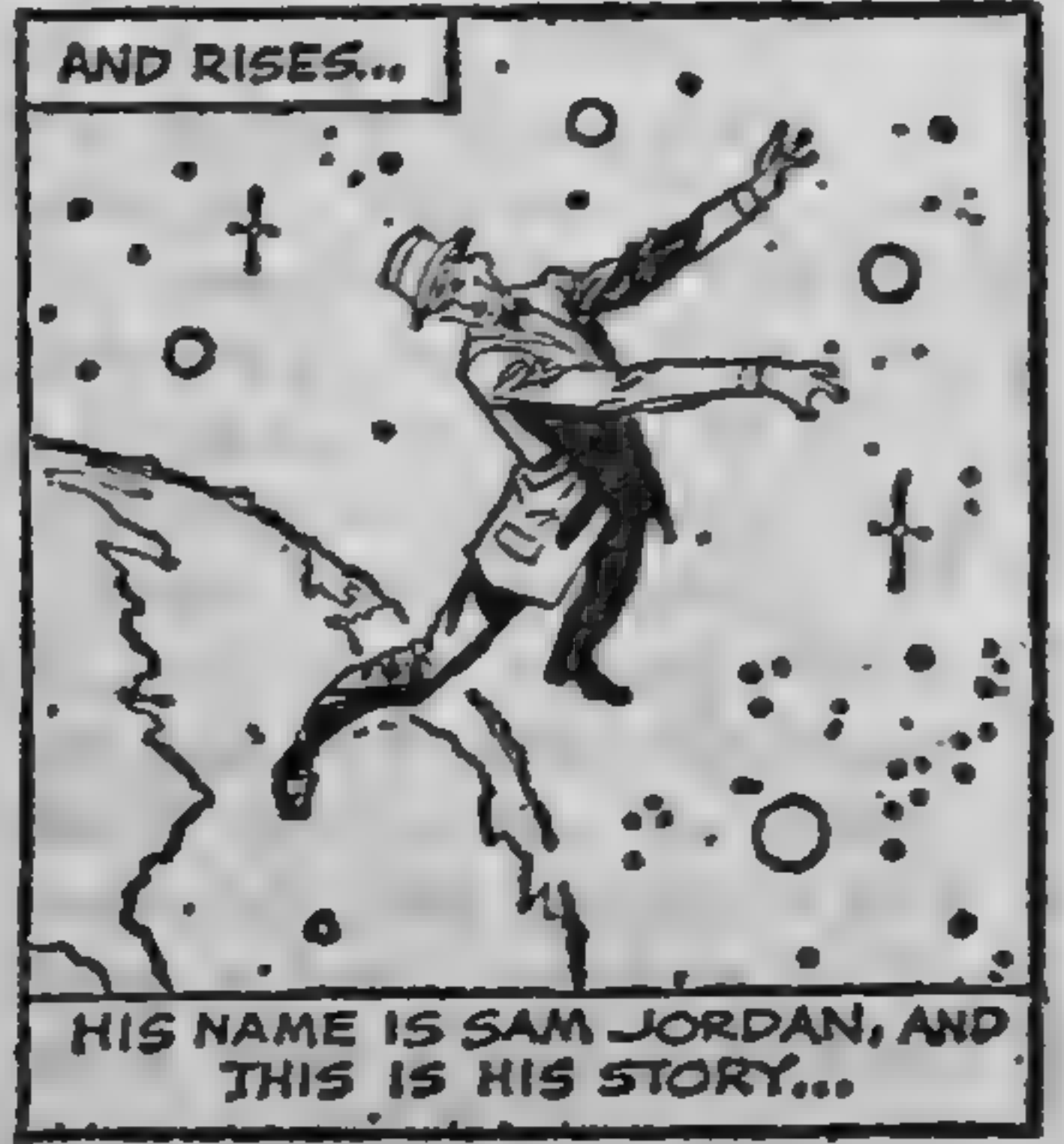


JUST  
RELICS, DOC!  
SOME VERY  
FASCINATING  
RELICS!

WILLIAMSON



# THE WITCHING HOUR!



HIS NAME IS SAM JORDAN, AND THIS IS HIS STORY...





IT BEGINS IN THE MIDWESTERN UNITED STATES, WHERE THE POLICE HAVE JUST BROKEN INTO AN EMPTY FURNISHED ROOM...

JORDAN'S GONE!  
...SKIPPED OUT!

WE'RE TOO LATE!

AND, AT THAT MOMENT, ON A TRAIN -- SPEEDING THROUGH EUROPE...

I WON'T RETURN TO THE STATES TILL THE HEAT'S OFF! IN THE MEANTIME, I'LL FIND A WAY TO MAKE SOME EASY DOUGH IN SOME OTHER COUNTRY!

HMMM... THAT DAME! SITTING ALONE! PEOPLE ARE ALWAYS LESS SUSPICIOUS OF A GUY IF HE'S TRAVELING WITH A WOMAN!

AND SO, TO PROVIDE HIMSELF WITH A BETTER FRONT...

HOPE YOU DON'T MIND MY INTRODUCING MYSELF! I'M AN AMERICAN, AND IT'S KINDA LONELY TRAVELING THROUGH A STRANGE COUNTRY!

I UNDERSTAND!

MINUTES LATER...

WE'RE PULLING INTO A SMALL VILLAGE! HOW ABOUT GOING OUTSIDE AND STRETCHING OUR LEGS?

ALL RIGHT!

BOY, WHAT AN OLD-FASHIONED BURG! SAY, WHAT ARE THOSE CHARMS EVERYONE'S WEARING AROUND THEIR NECKS?

THEY ARE TO WARD OFF WITCHES!

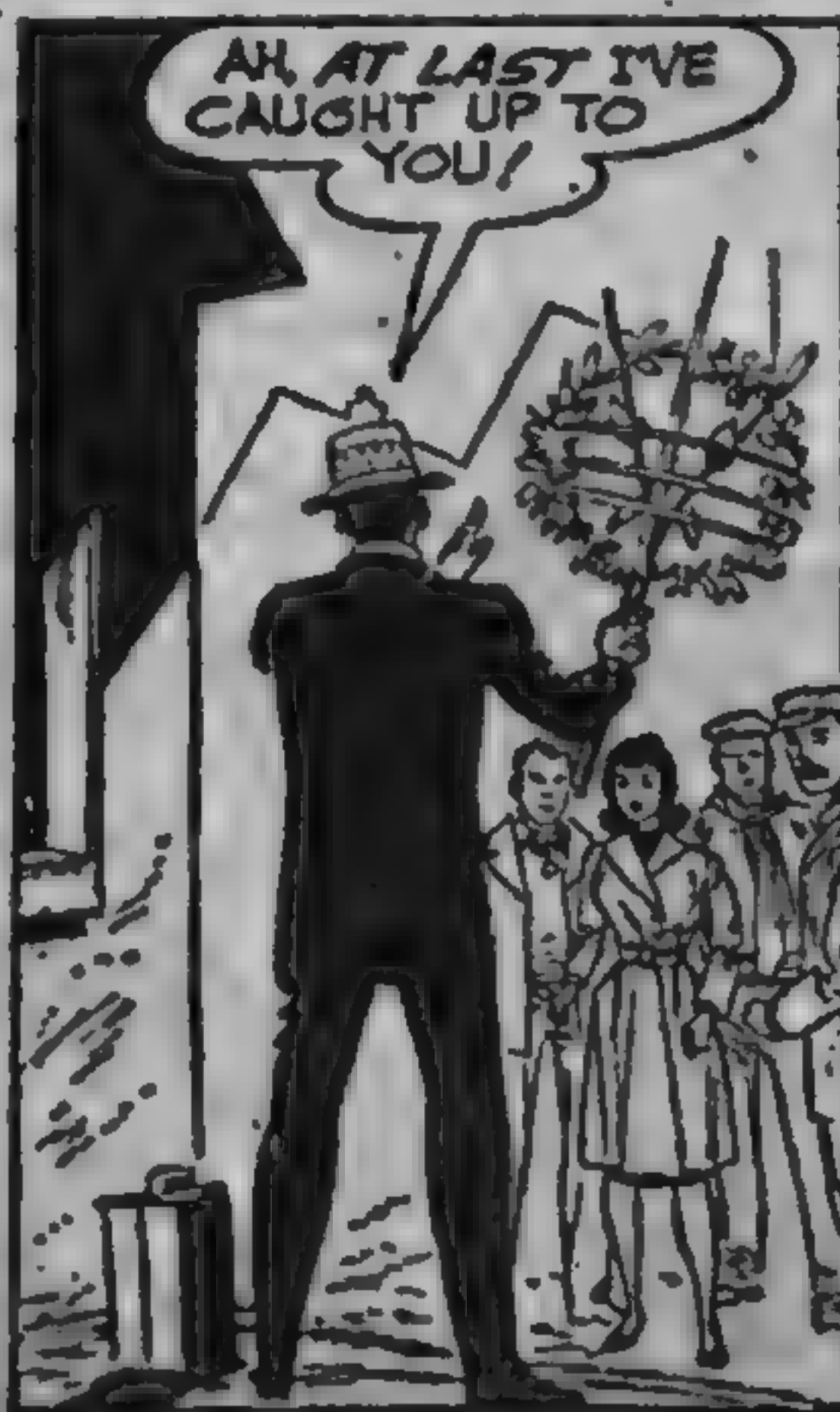
ARE YOU KIDDIN' ME? YOU MEAN THEY STILL BELIEVE IN WITCHES?

SAY... I GOT AN IDEA! I KNOW HOW WE CAN GET RICH!

WHERE ARE WE GOING?

WE'RE GONNA MAKE ME A WITCH HUNTER! AND YOU.... YOU'RE GONNA BE THE WITCH!













AND SO ENDS THE TALE OF SAM JORDAN... AT LEAST, AS FAR AS WE OF EARTH ARE CONCERNED! OF COURSE, FOR POOR SAM THE STORY WILL CONTINUE... IN THE VAST, DARK REACHES OF OUTER SPACE... WHERE, IF HE'S LUCKY, HE MAY EVEN LAND ON ANOTHER PLANET SOME DAY... IF HE SURVIVES!



# THE CHANGELING!



SOMETIMES A  
CHANGE CAN BE  
A **GOOD** THING  
...SOMETIMES  
IT CAN BE  
DISASTROUS!  
AND SOMETIMES  
IT IS VERY  
DIFFICULT TO  
TELL THE  
DIFFERENCE,  
AS YOU WILL  
SOON SEE!



OUR SCENE IS THE COUNTRYSIDE OF A SMALL MEDIEVAL KINGDOM! AND OUR OBJECT--TO SEE IF WE CAN SURPRISE YOU WITH THE FANTASTIC ENDING OF THIS ASTONISHING TALE!



BEGONE, PEASANT! YOU MAY NOT PICK WOOD ON THE KING'S ESTATE!

THE KING! BAH! HE IS A TYRANT!

THOSE ARE HARSH WORDS FROM A SIMPLE PEASANT! BUT, ARE THE WORDS *TRUE*? LET US SEE...

TO THE DUNGEON WITH HIM! HE HAS *FAILED*!

BUT YOUR MAJESTY--IT WAS AN *IMPOSSIBLE* TASK!

SILENCE!



AH, ANOTHER REWARDED FOR ATTEMPTING TO DO WHAT CANNOT BE DONE!

THE KING IS *MAD*! BUT THERE IS NO STOPPING HIM! HE WILL DESTROY US *ALL* IN HIS ATTEMPT TO... *CHANGE*!



LISTEN TO ME, ALL OF YOU! I HAVE COMMANDED YOU TO MAKE ME HANDSOME, AND YOU FAILED ME! YOU WILL ROT IN THAT DUNGEON UNTIL YOU FIND A WAY TO CHANGE MY LOOKS, DO YOU HEAR?? I *MUST* BECOME HANDSOME! I *MUST*!



EVERYONE DESPISES ME! EVEN THE WOMEN AT MY OWN COURT TURN AWAY WHEN I PASS! AND ALL BECAUSE I AM *UGLY*!



BUT I AM *KING*! I CAN COMMAND *ANYTHING*!

I ORDER YOU TO DINE WITH ME TONIGHT, OR I SHALL DRIVE YOUR PARENTS FROM THEIR LAND!

















# FLASH GORDON

IN THE LOST CONTINENT OF MONGO!

FROM THE 'ICE KINGDOM OF NAOUK TO THE LAND OF THE HAWKMEN, STRANGE TALES OF MONSTERS AND UNSPEAKABLE HORROR ARE TOLD ABOUT THE LOST CONTINENT OF MONGO! ALL THE STORIES HAVE ONE THING IN COMMON... THE AWESOME TERROR OF THE UNKNOWN!







FORGET THE TWO THEY  
ON THE GROUND! I HADN'T  
WIDEN MY EYES!

I'M NOT OF  
THE FUTURE,  
THE FUTURE  
I ALREADY

FLASH THAT  
MIST IT SPREADS  
LIKE MILES WHAT  
DO YOU SUPPOSE  
CAUSES IT?

INTO THE MIST THEY PLUNGE, PROBING THE HIDDEN  
GROUND WITH SONAR.



FLASH IF I DETECT A  
PATTERN TO THE SURFACE,  
LIKE A CITY! TELL ME YOU CAN  
GET BELOW THIS FOG?

I'LL DO  
MY BEST,  
ZARKOV



IT IS A  
CITY! LET'S GET  
DOWN THERE,  
ZARKOV!

BY ALL  
MANS  
FLASH



BUT SUDDENLY...

FLASH!  
THAT TOWER!  
WE'LL SMASH  
INTO IT! TURN  
RIGHT! TURN  
RIGHT!



FLASH SKILLFULLY AVOIDS  
A DIRECT HIT...

THERE GOES  
OUR WING TIP!  
HANG ON!



THAT MARSH.  
I'LL TRY TO  
LAND IN IT.





THE RIX BET SEEMS  
ACROSS THE MAR 21



AND COMES TO A SUDDEN  
SHATTERING HALT!



IS DALE  
ALL RIGHT?

YES, ZARKOV.  
THANK TAO  
SHE'S ONLY  
SLIGHTLY  
BRUISED.

LATER A CRUDE CAMP IS  
ESTABLISHED...



I'M AFRAID THE SHIP  
IS BEYOND REPAIR.  
THE RADIO WENT OUT  
ALONG WITH THE  
POWER PACK. FROM  
HERE ON WE'RE  
ON OUR OWN,  
FLASH.

WE'VE  
GOTTEN OUT  
OF WORSE  
SITUATIONS,  
ZARKOV. WE'LL  
MAKE IT!



OH, FLASH,  
WHAT A STRANGE  
LOOKING CITY.  
ARE WE GOING TO  
EXPLORE IT?

YES, DEAR,  
TOMORROW.  
BUT I DOUBT  
THAT WE'LL FIND  
ANY SIGNS OF  
HUMAN  
LIFE.

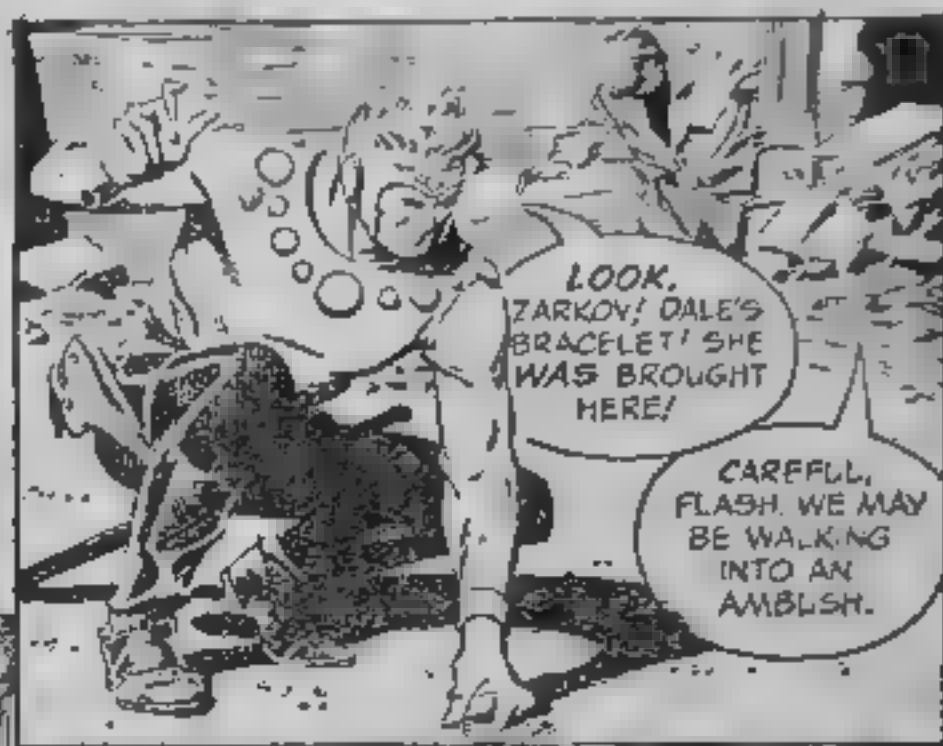
THE NEXT MORNING...



ZARKOV!!  
WAKE UP! DALE'S  
DISAPPEARED!

WHAT!  
GOOD HEAVENS  
FLASH!







WITHOUT WARNING THE LEADER  
AIMS AN ARROW AT FLASH.



BUT FLASH  
IS QUICKER  
AND FIRES  
HIS RAY  
Pistol.



AS THE STRICKEN WARRIOR SINKS TO THE  
GROUND, THE OTHERS WAVER LIKE SMOKE  
THEN FADE FROM SIGHT..

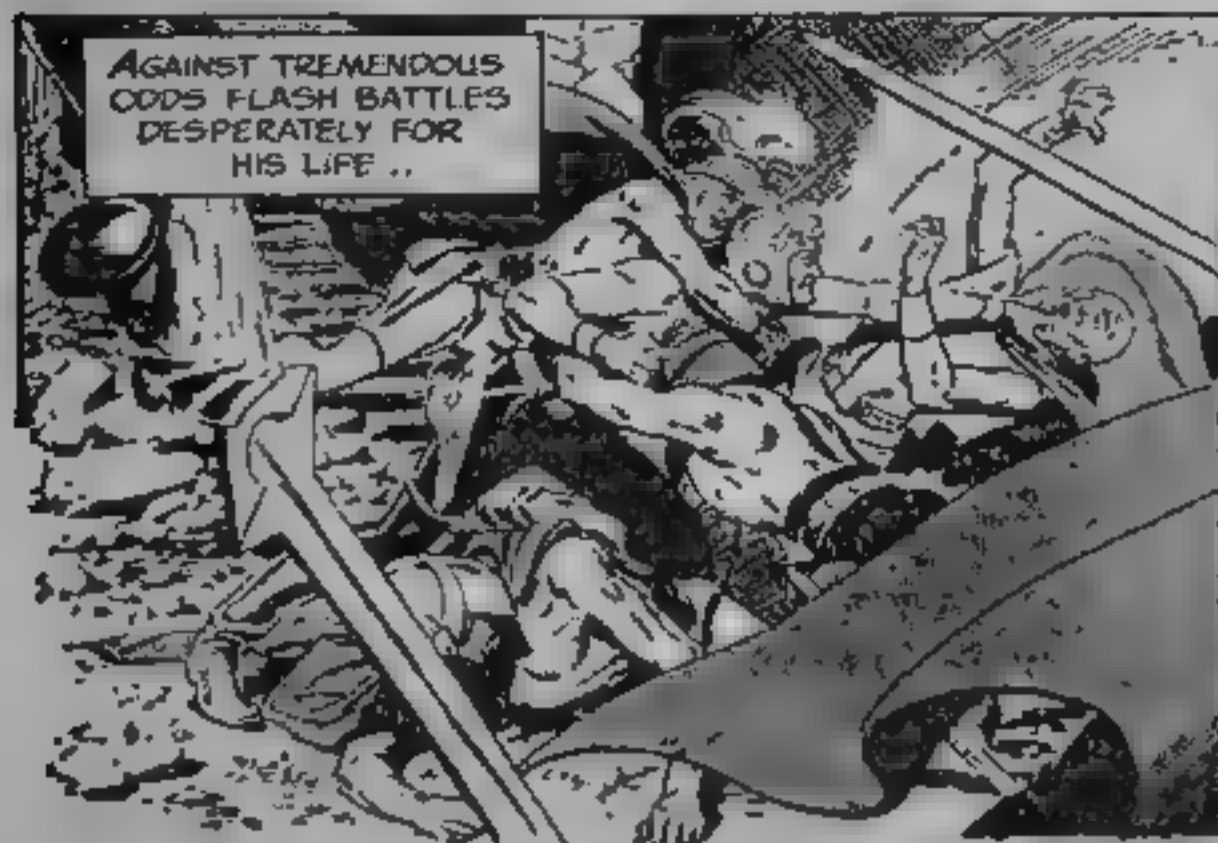


LOOK OUT,  
ZARKON,  
THEY'RE  
BEHIND  
US!

LIFFFF!!



AGAINST TREMENDOUS  
ODDS FLASH BATTLES  
DESPERATELY FOR  
HIS LIFE ..



...BUT IS HOPELESSLY  
OVERCOME.











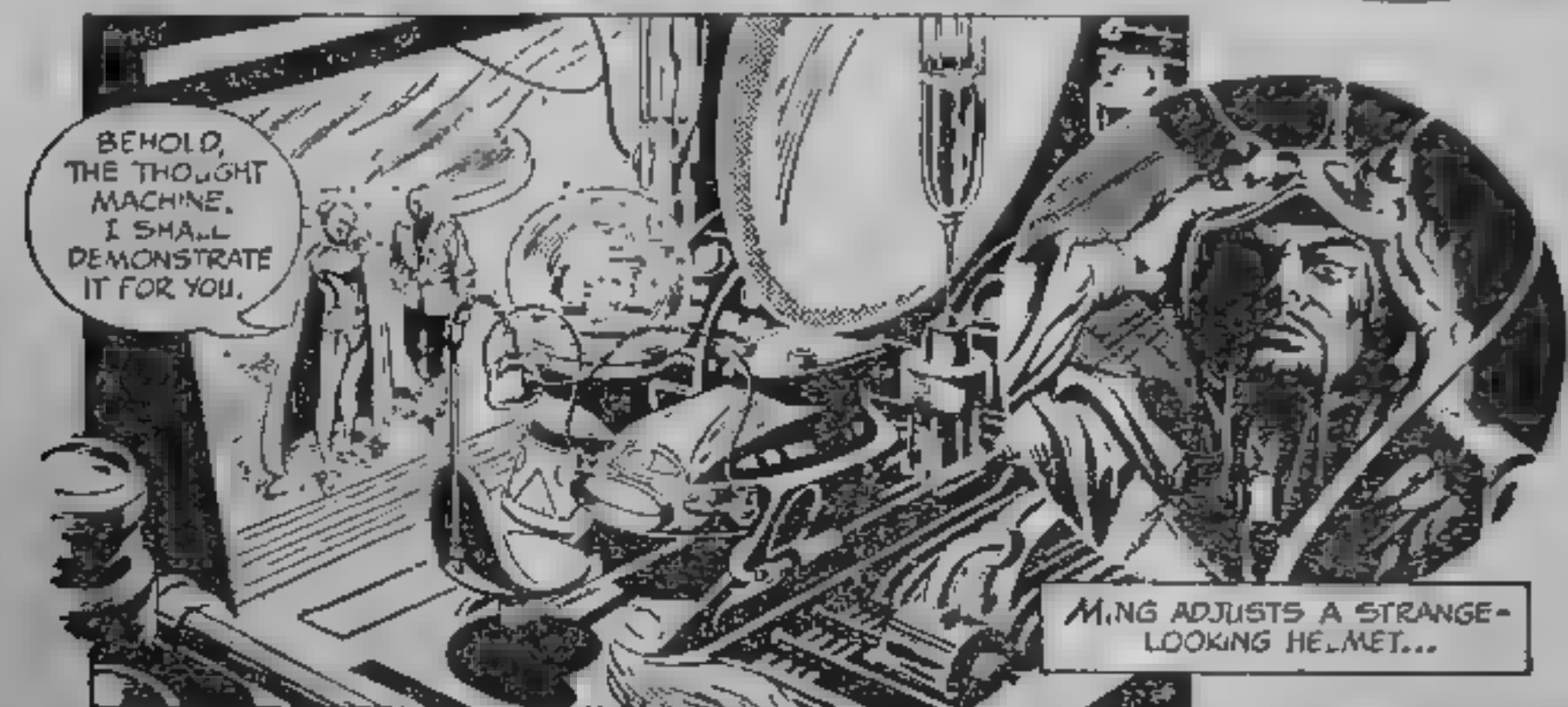
BEN WITH A  
SECTION OF THE  
ANCIENT CITY

VERY WELL  
I'M READY  
TO COMPLY

I'M GLAD TO HEAR IT  
ONE OF THE MEN  
WHO'D CAPTURE ME

YOU NEED  
NOT FEAR,  
DR ZARKOV I WILL  
SWEAR YOUR LIFE SO  
YOU MAY WORK IN MY  
LABORATORY BUT  
SHOULD YOU TRY TO  
ESCAPE OR INTERFERE  
WITH MY PLANS  
DALE ARDEN  
SHALL DIE!

THAT MY  
DEAR DR ZARKOV,  
IS MY SUPREME  
ACHIEVEMENT  
COME I WILL  
SHOW YOU.



BEHOLD,  
THE THOUGHT  
MACHINE.  
I SHALL  
DEMONSTRATE  
IT FOR YOU.

MING ADJUSTS A STRANGE-  
LOOKING HELMET...



THUNDERATION!  
WHERE DID THEY  
COME FROM?



MEANWHILE, AS FLASH IS  
FRANTICALLY SEARCHING THE  
RUINS OF THE ANCIENT CITY..

WHAT  
TH---!





WHILE IN KING'S LABORATORY...

THEN THOSE  
WARRIORS WERE ONLY  
YOUR THOUGHTS.

THAT'S  
'CORRECT' WITH  
THIS MACHINE I  
CAN CONjure UP  
THOUSANDS OF  
FIGHTING MEN  
TO OBEY MY  
EVERY WISH.

I SHALL  
CONQUER  
ALL MONGO  
AND REGAIN MY  
RIGHTFUL  
POSITION AS  
SUPREME  
EMPEROR OF  
THE UNIVERSE.

AT THAT MOMENT, MANY MILES AWAY IN THE  
CLIFF VILLAGE OF THE BIRDMEN...

CHIEF GRUBA, I FOUND  
THIS MAN IN THE CITY  
OF THE EVIL ONE.

GOOD! WE  
MAKE HIM  
SLAVE! I WILL  
TEACH HIM  
OBEDIENCE!



GRUBA LASHES  
OUT AT FLASH  
WITH A HUGE  
BULLWHIP...



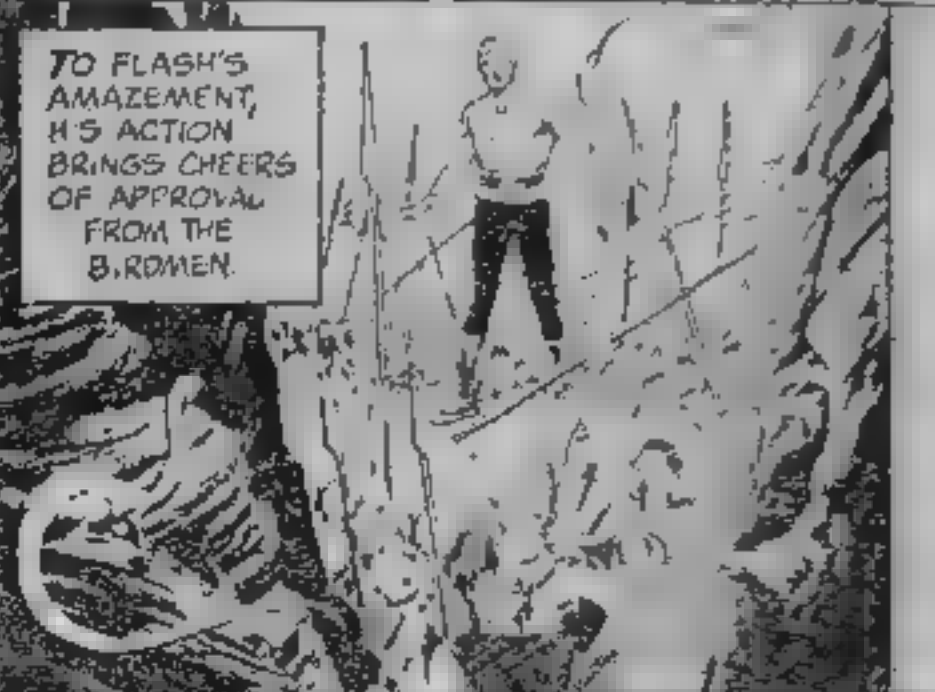


DRAWING THE  
POW KILL GRUBA  
TOWARD HIM FLASH  
LETS HIM INTO  
THE AIR...



...THEN SENDS HIM CRASHING TO THE GROUND

TO FLASH'S  
AMAZEMENT,  
HIS ACTION  
BRINGS CHEERS  
OF APPROVAL  
FROM THE  
B.ROMEN.



GRUBA WAS A BAD CHIEF. NOW YOU  
WILL BE OUR LEADER ACCORDING TO  
OUR LAW. WE  
ARE YOURS TO  
COMMAND.

VERY WELL, JOIN IN SAVING  
MY FRIENDS FROM THE 'EVIL  
ONE' MING  
THE  
MERCILESS!



LATER AS MING SCANS HIS REFLECTOVENER

AM'HH, LOOK.  
MY DEAR EARN'Y  
FLASH GORDON HAS  
ENLISTED THE AID  
OF THOSE SAVAGES  
TO RESCUE YOU  
AND MING ARDEN.





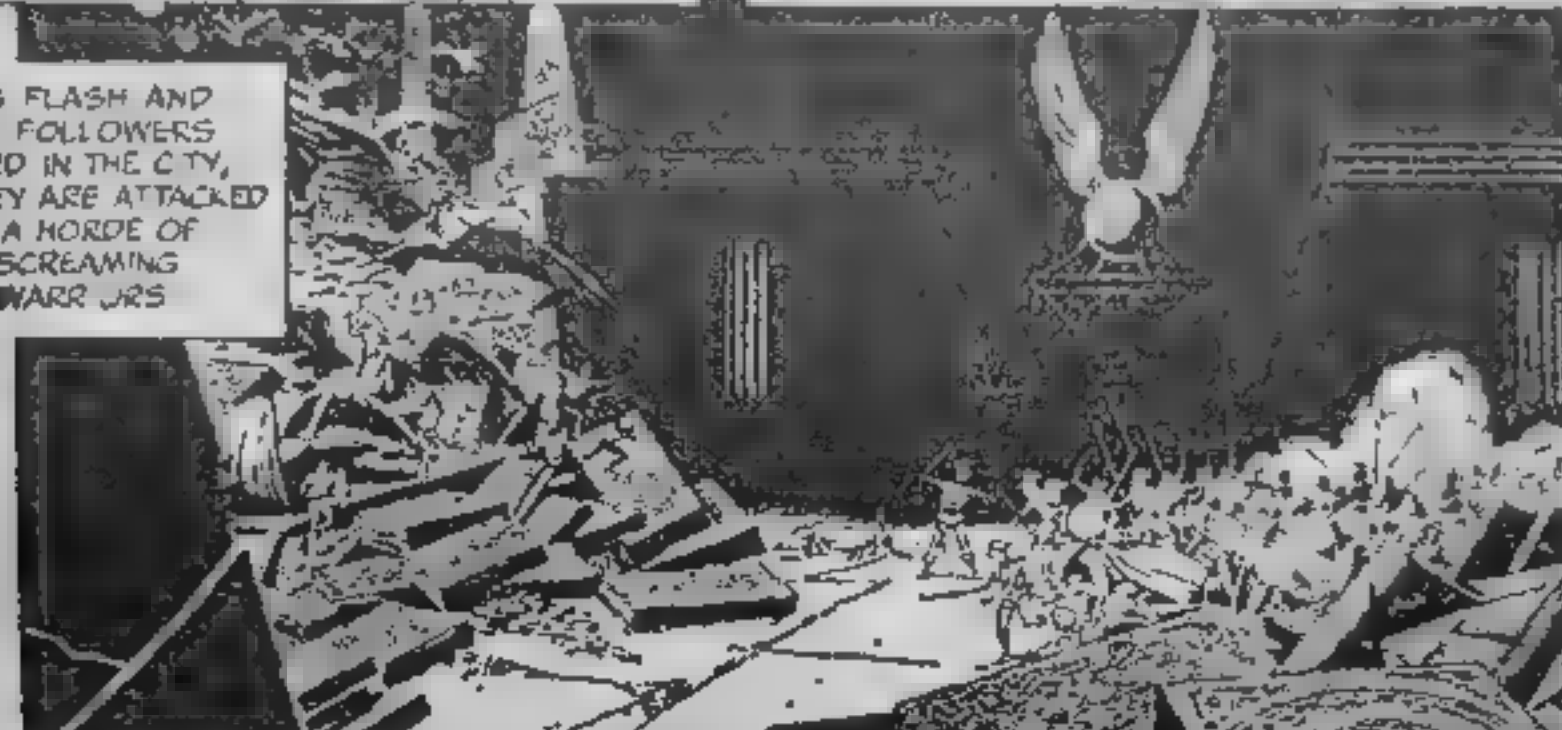
MING TURNS TO THE  
BY HIS GLARES...

BEING AHEAD  
AND NOT  
FOR THE WIN  
THE IS CAT  
OF THE  
THAT W

AND GO WITH DALE AND JACKY AS HIS CAPTIVE AUDIENCE  
MING ONCE AGAIN PUTS ON THE STRANGE HELMET



AS FLASH AND  
HIS FOLLOWERS  
LAND IN THE CITY,  
THEY ARE ATTACKED  
BY A HORDE OF  
SCREAMING  
WARRIORS



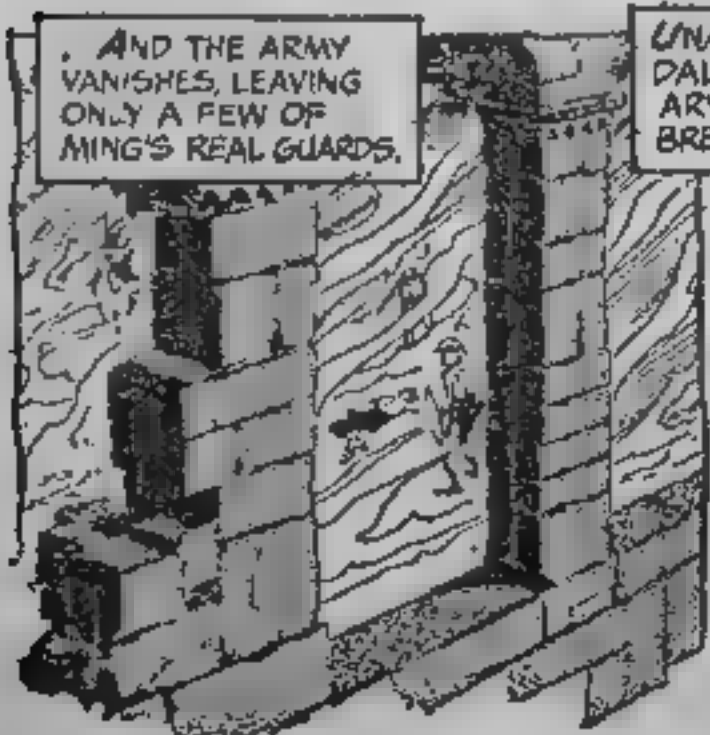
THOUGH PITIFULLY  
OUTNUMBERED THE  
BIRDMEN FIGHT BRAVELY  
UNTIL A SHOWER OF  
ARROWS FORCES A  
QUICK RETREAT...

MOMENTARILY FORGETTING FLASH, THE  
WARRIORS PURSUE THE RETREATING BIRDMEN.



THESE BIRDMEN  
WERE KILLED WITH  
ARROWS, YET THEY  
HAVE NO WOUNDS  
AND THE ARROWS  
ARE GONE!





UNABLE TO STAND THE SHOCK, DALE FAINTS... IN THE MOMENTARY CONFUSION ZARKOV BREAKS FREE...





BUT BEFORE MING CAN CARRY OUT HIS THREAT...



BUT THE EARTHMAN'S BODY PROVES TO BE FAR FROM LIFELESS...



TAKING ADVANTAGE OF THE TURN OF EVENTS, ZARKOV HOLDS THE REMAINING GUARDS IN CHECK...







AFTER A FEW MINUTES OF  
FERCE FIGHTING FLASH  
DISCOVERS MING'S WEAKNESS...



...AND, WITH A QUICK MOVE-  
MENT, DISARMS HIM!

NOW MING  
YOU ARE MY  
PRISONER!



YOU W H, GORDON! BUT YOU'LL  
NEVER HAVE THE SATISFACTION  
OF TAKING ME  
ALIVE!



WITHOUT WARNING, MING LEAPS INTO THE  
SMOLDERING PIT.



I GUESS THAT'S THE  
END OF MING. THAT  
POWER PIT IS FILLED  
WITH THORIUM 12 WHICH  
EMITS A DEADLY RAY



LATER AS THE TRIO ARE  
ON THEIR WAY TO THE  
CLIFF VILLAGE OF THE  
BIRDMEN...

BUT FLASH,  
WE SAW YOU  
DIE. WHAT  
HAPPENED?

I SUSPECTED MING WAS  
HYPNOTIZING US. ONCE I  
REALIZED HIS WARRIORS  
WERE IMAGINARY, I FAKED  
MY DEATH. HOWEVER, THE  
BIRDMEN BELIEVED  
WHAT THEY SAW.  
YOU MIGHT  
SAY THEY WERE  
FRIGHTENED  
TO DEATH!



# THE WEATHERMAN

"DON'T know what the world is coming to," said Willie Wimm as he put down the morning newspaper. "Says here that there's a scientific rainmaker working this area. Seems it's been too dry and the reservoir water is running low. The prediction is for the rain to break this afternoon. Imagine that, rain today and all because science can make it!"

"Well, what's wrong with artificial rainmaking?" asked his bright-eyed son, Hugh Wimm.

"Oh, nothing's wrong with it," his father replied. "I'm just amazed at what folks are able to do nowadays."

Hugh shrugged his shoulders. It didn't affect him like it did his father to read about modern rainmaking. He was growing up in an age where he accepted these things as casually as his Dad had once regarded electric lights or radio.

"Only thing that bothers me," Hugh confessed, "is that our baseball outing will be rained out! The fellows were planning a picnic, too. Golly, I wish this old rainmaker didn't have to spoil our fun. There's nothing we can do now."

"Hugh, will you come here a minute," his mother called. "I forgot to pick up your father's cold medicine when I was in town this morning, but I can't run in again. I've got to get the laundry done before this rain runs my chances to dry the wash. Your Dad mustn't take a chill by going out, so I'm go-

ing to send you. Put on your rain slicker in case it starts coming down, and ride your bicycle carefully over the roads in case you get caught in the down-pour.

"I don't know if we should let Hugh go out now," his father said with a worried shake of his head. "It's a long way to town, and if a storm breaks before he gets back here . . ."

"Oh, please, Dad, I'll manage fine!" Hugh assured him. "Doctor said you should take that medicine, you know."

He ran to get his rain gear, and his mother looked after him smilingly.

"He's proud as can be to have the responsibility," she told Mr. Wimm. "And besides, it does give him something to do now that the boys have had their plans spoiled."

After Hugh left the druggist, he noticed that the sky was quite dark. He would have to hurry or he might get caught in the storm, he decided. He pedaled his bicycle as fast as he could. When he saw a stick lying on the road ahead of him, he had no time to brake and avoid it. Fortunately, it was not too large a stick, so he rode over it. The stick snapped in two, but at the same time there was a rumble of loud thunder, and the wheels of his bicycle went flat. The bicycle jogged to a stop, and Hugh tumbled off.

"How could a little stick like that cause so much trouble?" he asked aloud as he got to his

feet again.

"Trouble!" a voice exclaimed behind him. "That stick didn't cause as much trouble as you did, my lad! That stick was one of my most valuable tools!"

Hugh turned quickly to see a strange-looking fellow staring angrily at him. He was dressed head to foot in an oilskin wrapper unlike any raincoat Hugh had ever seen.

"I'm sorry if I caused you any trouble," Hugh apologized politely. "I was hurrying home to . . ."

"Indeed you were," snapped the little man. "Just look up there and you'll see what you've done!"

Hugh looked skywards. He could hardly believe his eyes! The clouds overhead had split as cleanly as the stick he had broken, and the clear sky gleamed through.

"I . . . I don't understand how I did that," Hugh stammered in confusion.

"Young man," the stranger said, "this is the first time in thousands of years that I've quarreled with anyone who interfered with my work. I usually don't brag to folks about the work I do. Today I guess I let my temper get the better of me. You might as well know the whole story.

"I am a rainmaker, one of the best there is, I must admit. Now, fellows in my profession have a lot of land to cover. When it's off season in my particular territory, I can take a



vacation. I was just preparing to enjoy myself when this scientific rainmaker spoils everything for me. Now, science has its good features, son, and I'd be the last person in the Universe to talk down the merits of that noble profession. On the other hand without my help, your scientific rainmaker wouldn't stand a chance. It's been my job through the centuries to get to the scene of a storm and regulate the elements. My rainmaking stick is essential to this work, I assure you. If the magic stick isn't perfect, the storms will get out of hand. Like music, my boy, the pieces of an orchestra need a good conductor. That's what I do with rain, wind, lightning, thunder. I'm the appointed maestro for this territory. Don't you believe me?"

"Well, it does sound a little far-fetched," Hugh admitted honestly. "But I can understand how you feel if this scientific rainmaker made it necessary for you to cut short your vacation plans so that you can conduct today's storm."

"I'm pleased to find you're sympathetic, even if you *did* break my rain stick," the stranger glowed.

"As a matter of fact," Hugh said, "the fellows and I were planning an outing this afternoon. All we needed were a few hours of sunshine to make us happy. Would have done my Pop a world of good, too, seeing as he just got over being sick."

"That is too bad," the stranger said. "Of course, in my job it's impossible to please everyone, but you are a well-mannered boy, and you've behaved nicely. You didn't mean to break the stick, did you?"

"Oh, no," said Hugh hastily. "I wouldn't be that selfish because I know the reservoir is low, or the rainmaker . . . that is, the scientific rainmaker wouldn't have been called in on the job."

"Well, in that case," the fellow said thoughtfully, "I might delay getting this stick fixed until . . . say six o'clock. With a little overtime 'leading', I could whip up the elements to do some overtime and make up for the rainfall I would have gotten going this afternoon. Would that suit you?"



"It certainly would," said Hugh eagerly.

The fellow picked up the broken stick and grinned cheerfully.

"All right then. Enjoy the sunsh'ne, my boy . . . but get home by six o'clock sharp! Hurry off now, and please keep this meeting a secret. I really shouldn't talk so freely. It would never do for word to get around about me. I'd become a public spectacle and there wouldn't be time for doing my job properly."

It took Hugh some time to walk his flat-tired bicycle home.

He gave the medicine to his father who had come outside to bask in the sudden sunshine.

"Cleared up unexpectedly," he said happily. "Your friends decided to go on that outing after all. They're waiting for you. But you better clean up first. From the looks of you, you must have taken quite a spill from your bike!"

Sure enough, Hugh noticed that his hands and dungarees were scraped with dirt. In the mirror he saw a dark mark on his forehead. It looked as if he might have bumped himself, but he felt no pain.

Could it be, he wondered, that in a split-second's time he had fallen from his bike and dreamed the meeting with the stranger? But if he had, how did that account for the clear skies overhead?

"I'll be back at six," he told his mother. "It's going to rain then."

"How do you know?" she asked in amazement.

Yet, at six o'clock, back home, the Wimm family watched the rain begin.

"Artificial rainmaking sure is marvelous," his father said.

"So is Hugh," his mother enthused. "He predicted the exact hour this would start."

That Hugh is a weather forecaster today, you may say, is pure coincidence. He's not always right in his forecasts, mind you, but he chuckles over that. Somehow, he's got a hunch that an oilskin-wrapped stranger with a mended "stick" is occasionally playing a practical joke on him.



TAKE A LONELY HILL... PUT A MYSTERIOUS LABORATORY ATOP IT... AND YOU'VE EMBARKED ON A JOURNEY INTO... THE UNKNOWN!

FOR YEARS I HAVE BEEN WORKING ON MY MACHINE! NOW, AT LAST, IT IS FINISHED-- THE WORLD'S FIRST GROWTH RAY!



STEADY, LITTLE CREATURE! YOU ARE ABOUT TO MAKE SCIENTIFIC HISTORY!

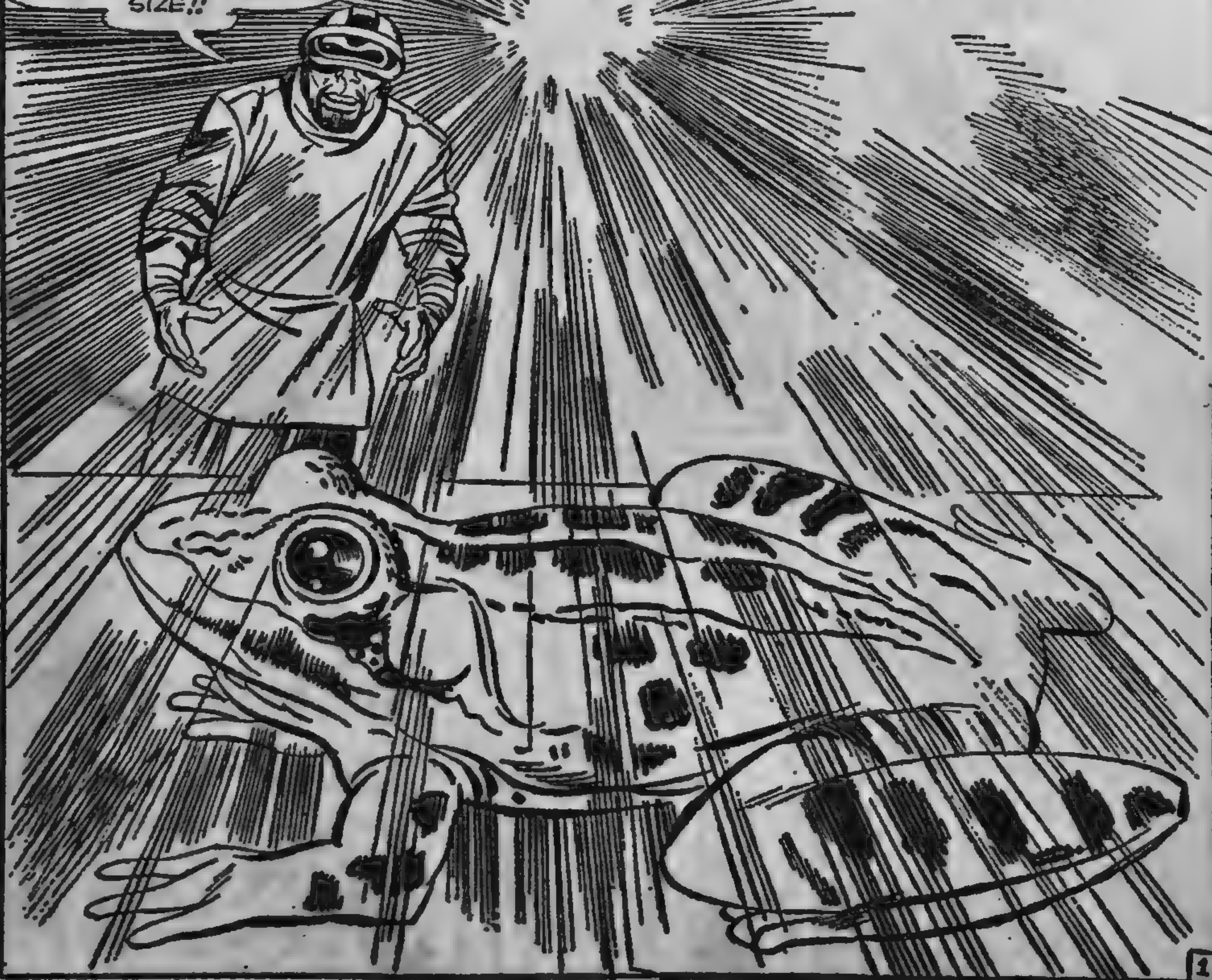


THE FROG IS IN PLACE! NOW I MERELY SWITCH ON THE MACHINE...

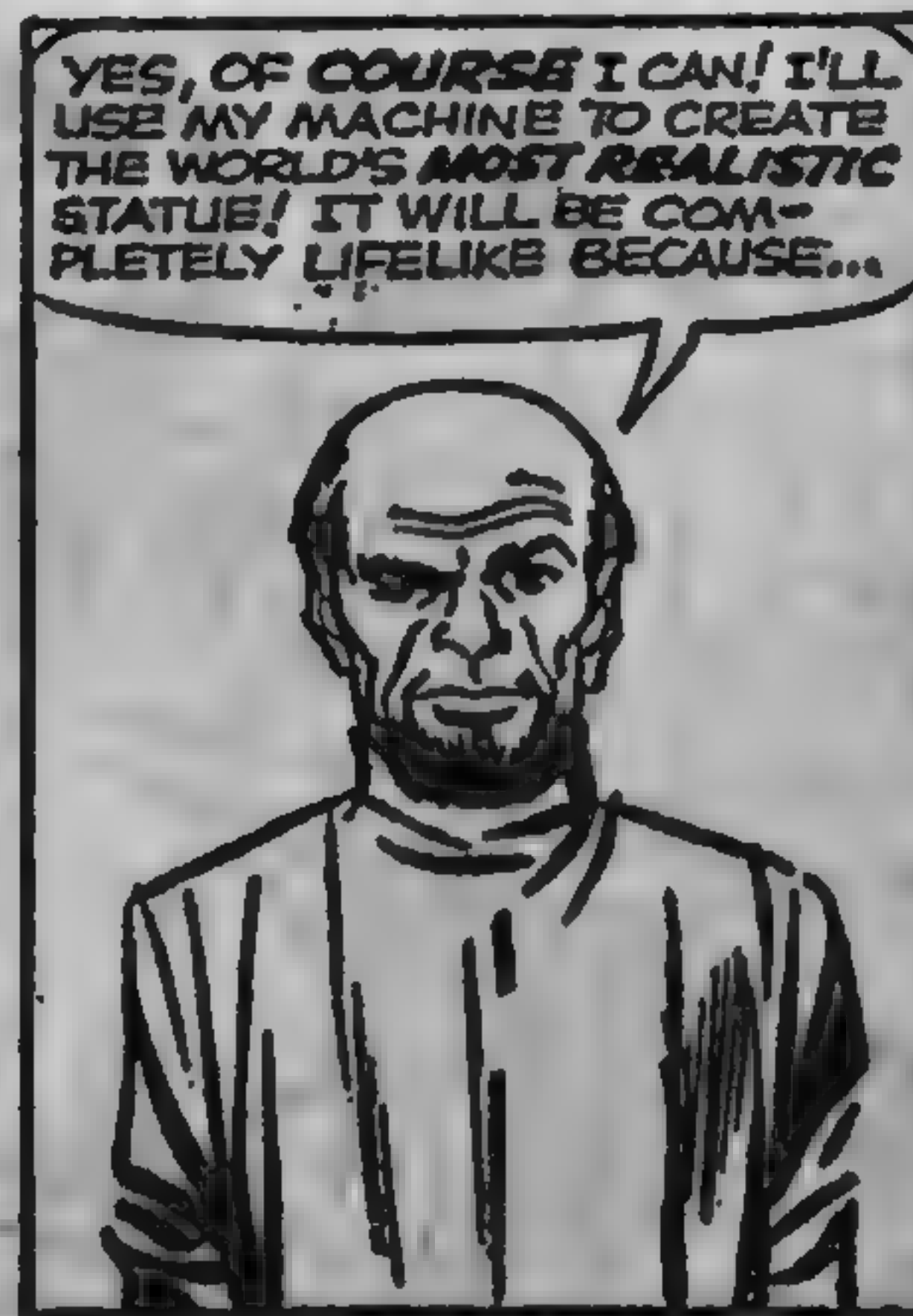
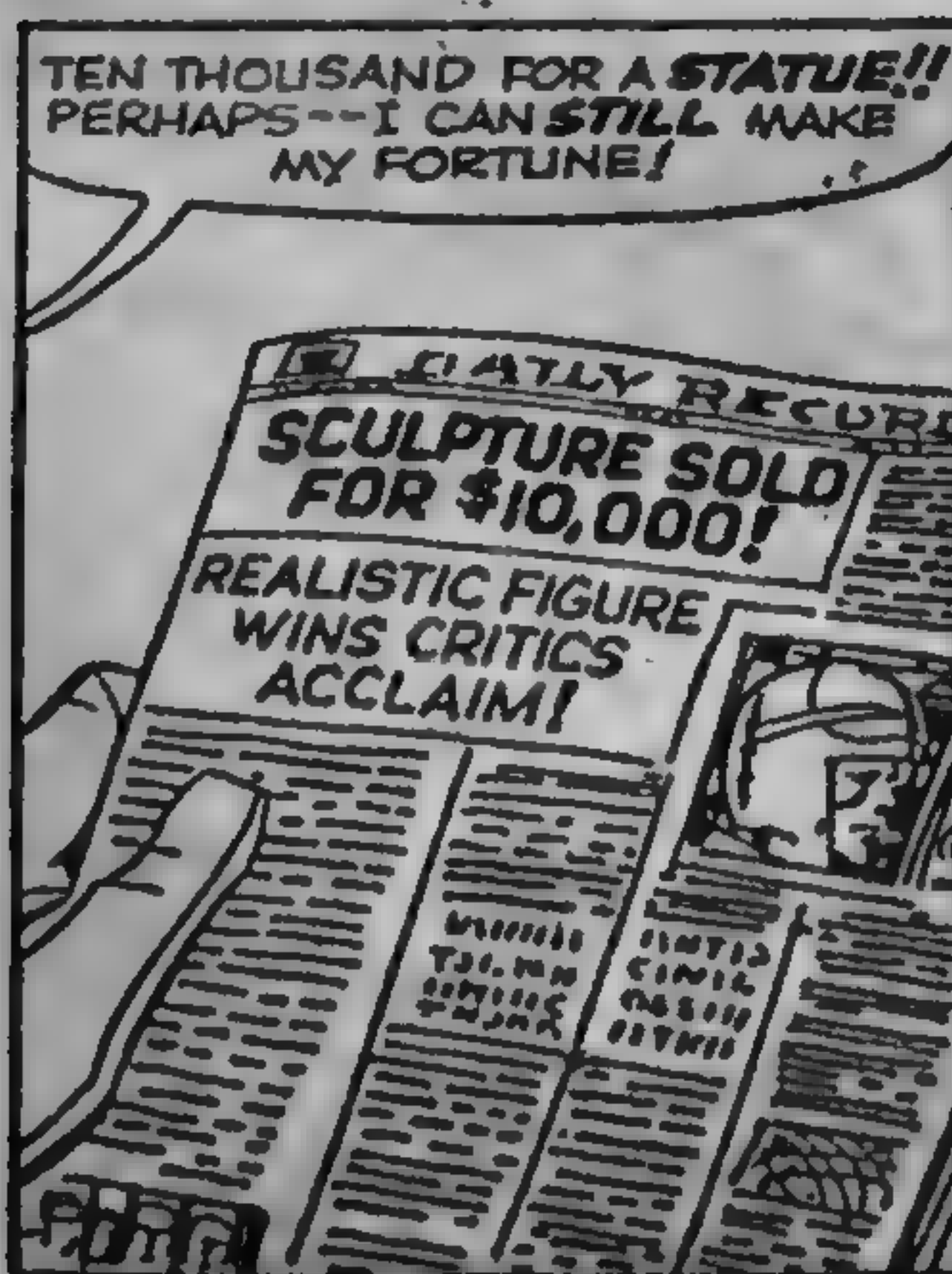
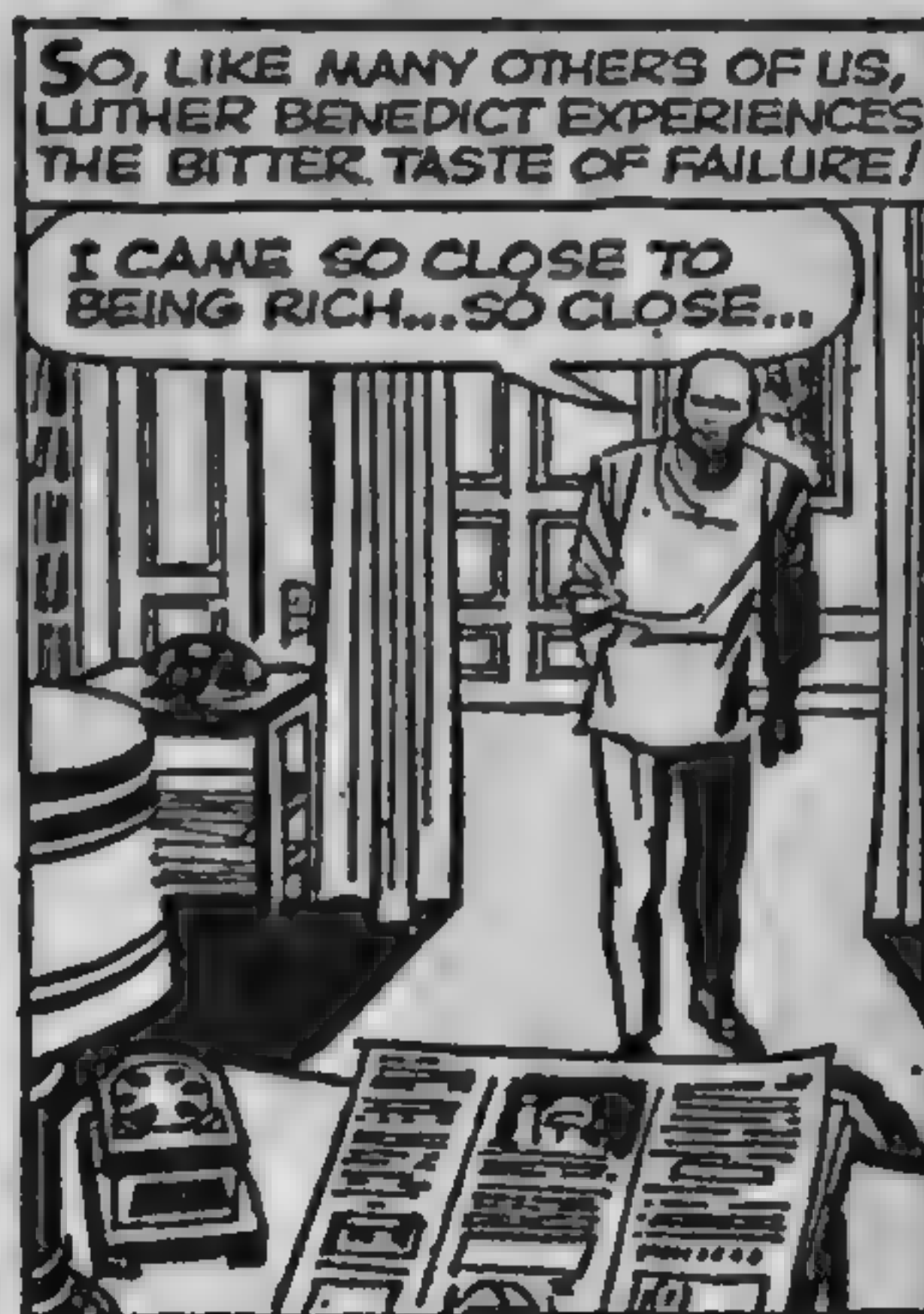


# THE STRANGE FATE OF THE STATUE MAKER!

...AND WATCH MY GROWTH RAY ENLARGE THE ANIMAL TO TWICE HIS NORMAL SIZE!!











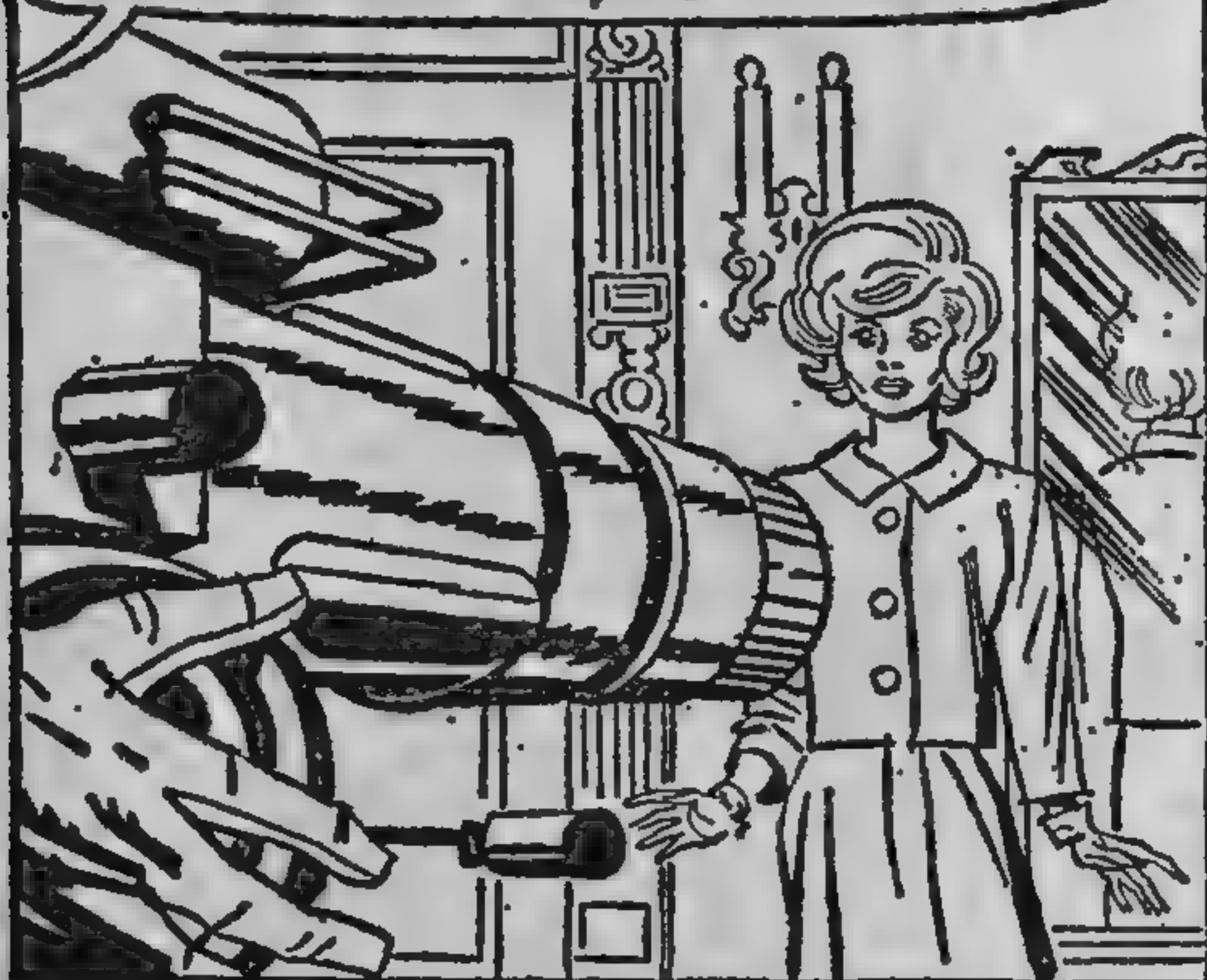




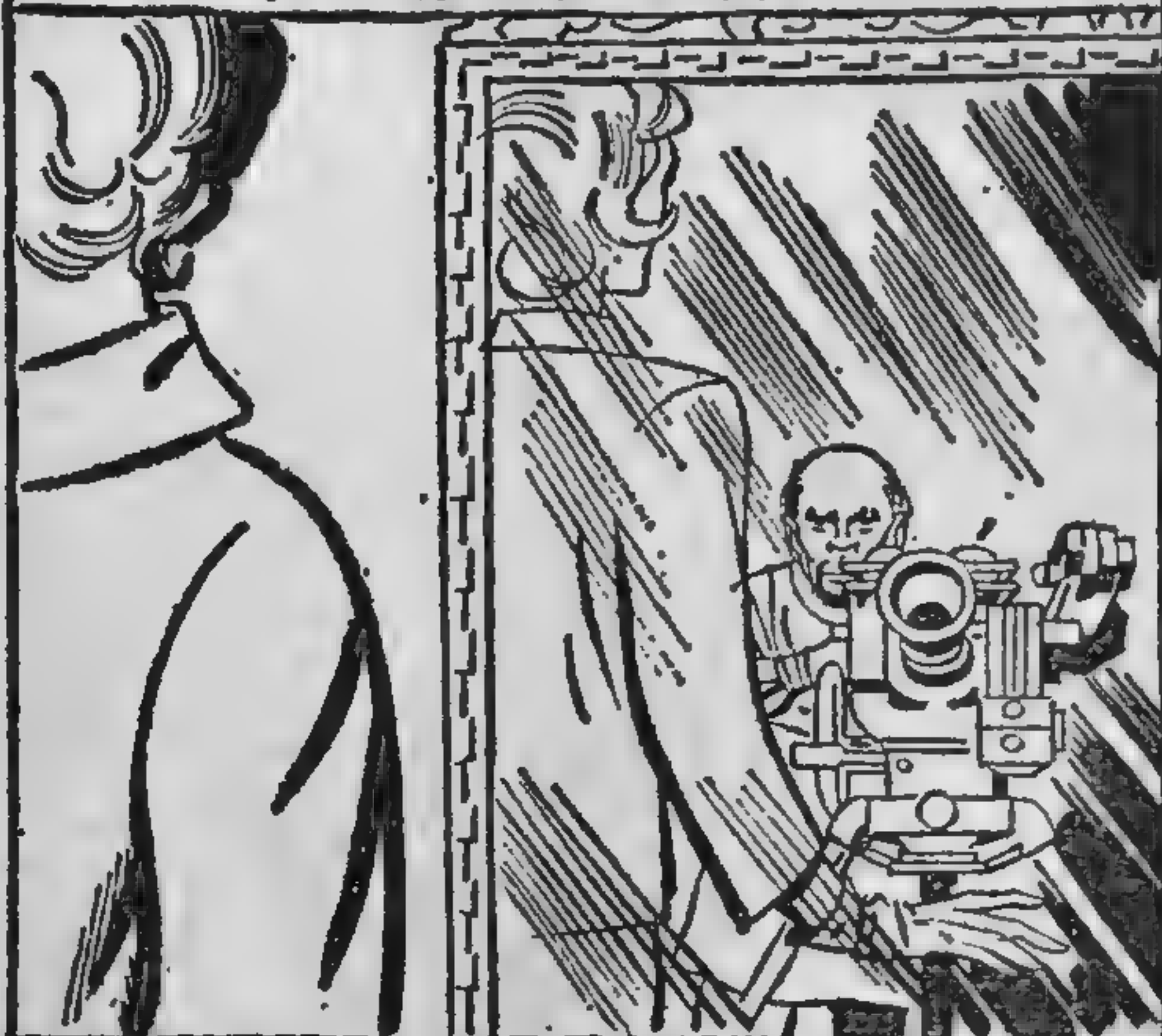


AND SO, LUTHER BENEDICT AGAIN SETS UP HIS FANTASTIC MACHINE...

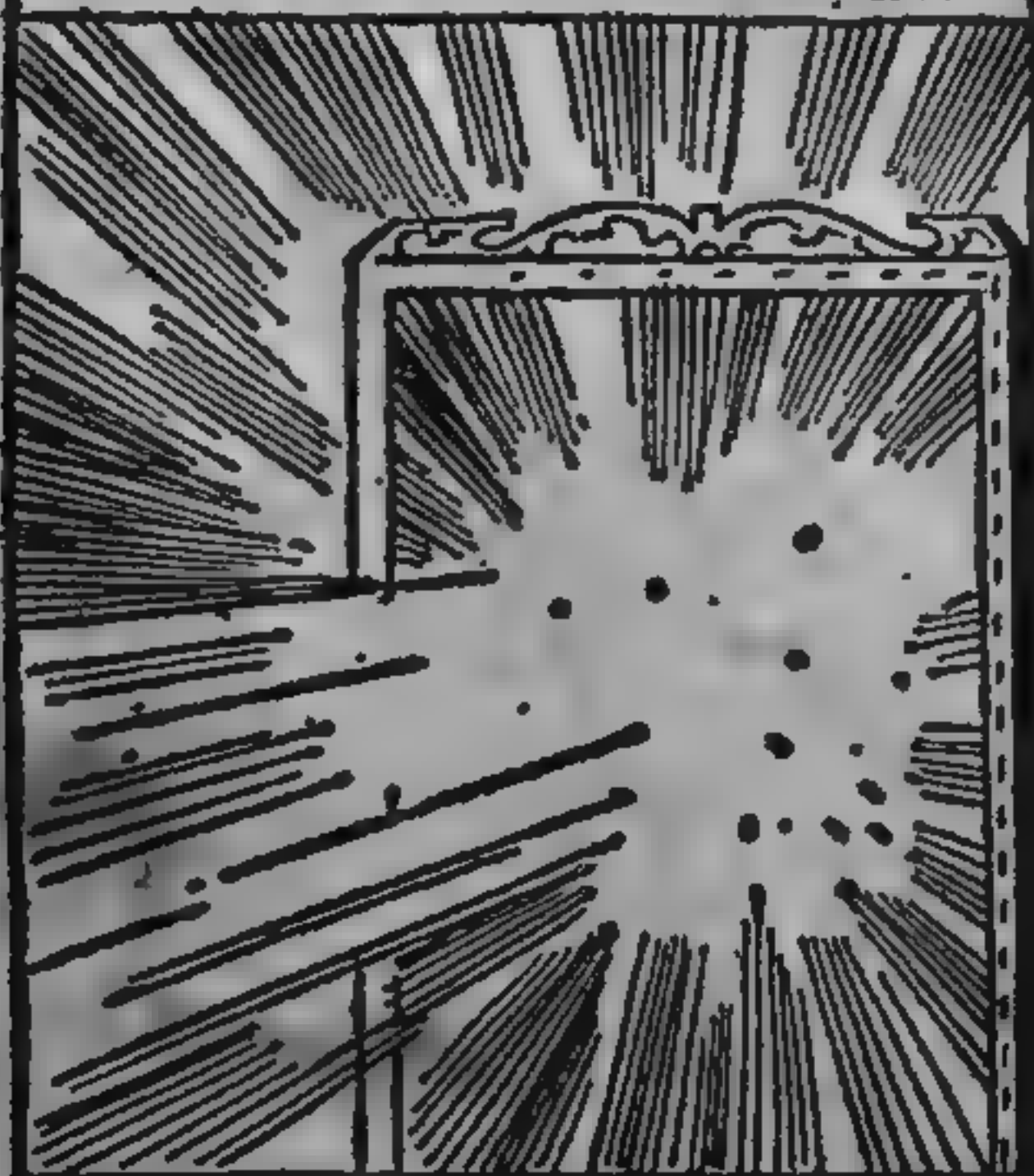
THIS *MUST* WORK! IT MUST RETURN HER TO HUMAN FORM AGAIN! *IT MUST!!*



BUT EVEN AS HE STARTS UP THE MACHINE, LUTHER FAILS TO NOTICE THE MIRROR BEHIND HER...



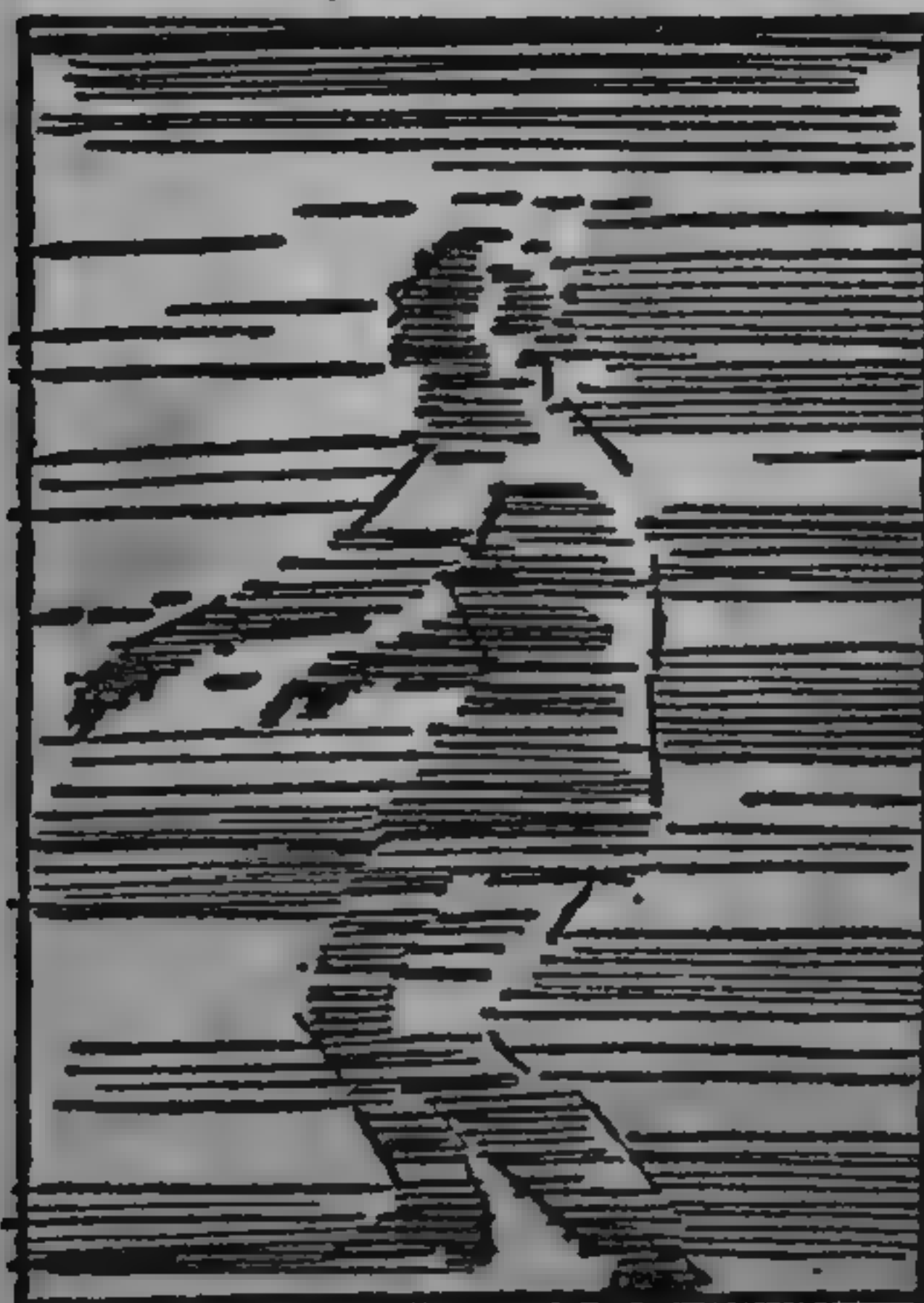
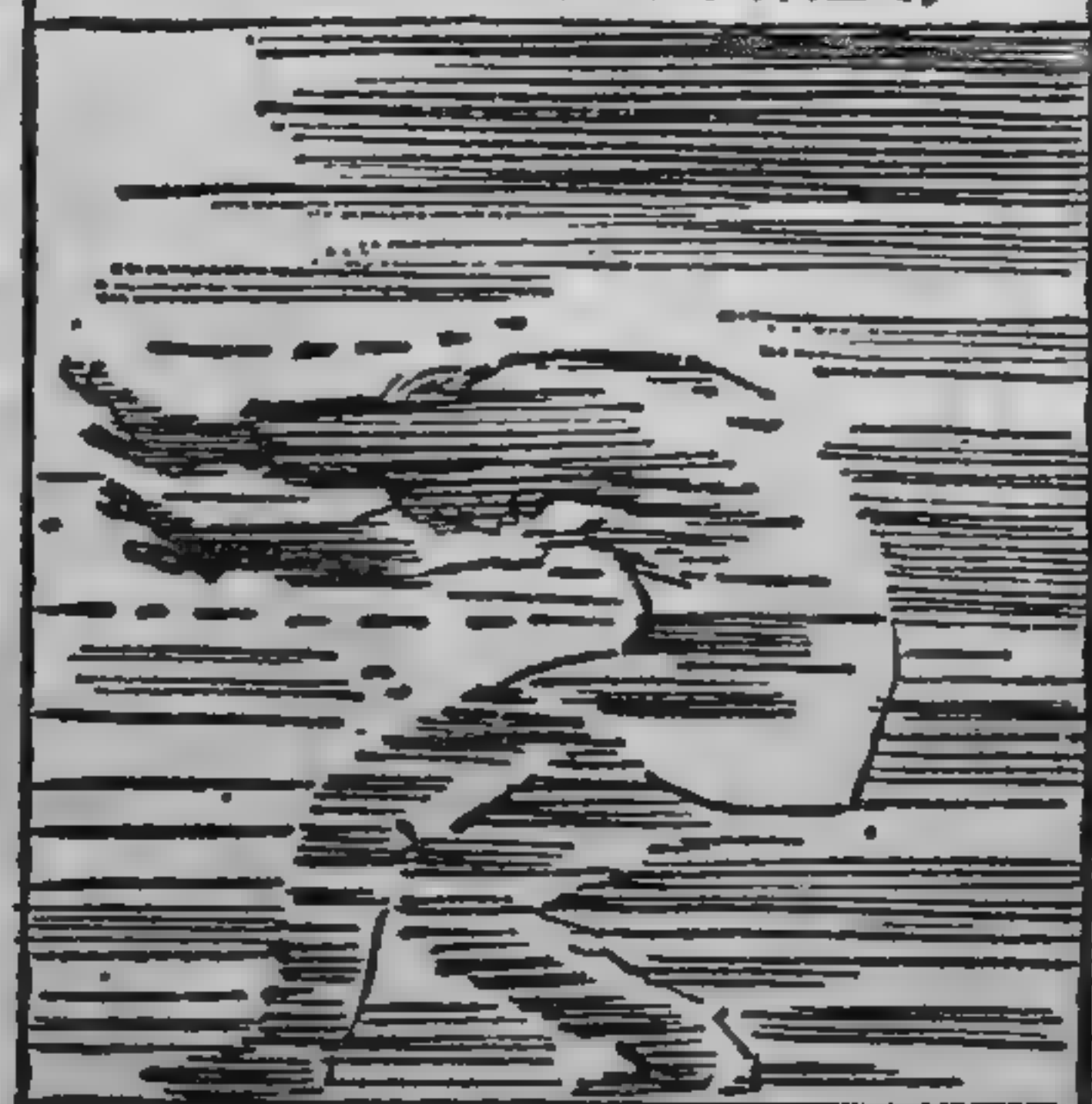
AND, AS THE ELECTRONIC RAYS FLASH OUT FROM THE MACHINE, THEY HIT NOT ONLY THE STATUE, BUT ALSO THE MIRROR...



...FROM WHERE THEY RE-FLECT BACK... BACK TO THE STARTLED, HELPLESS FIGURE OF THEIR CREATOR!!



AND, WITHIN A MATTER OF SECONDS, LUTHER BENEDICT MEETS THE FATE HE HAD INTENDED FOR ANOTHER!



MEANWHILE, WAVE UPON WAVE OF ELECTRONS CONTINUE TO BOMBARD THEIR TARGET...





SOON THE ATOMS OF  
LIFELESS STONE ARE  
AGAIN TURNING BACK INTO  
LIVING BONE AND TISSUE...



I CAME ABOUT THE AD  
IN THE PAPER! IS  
ANYBODY HERE??

NO  
ANSWER!



THERE'S NOBODY HERE--EXCEPT THAT STRANGE-  
LOOKING STATUE! OH WELL, IT MUST HAVE BEEN  
A PRACTICAL JOKE! OR, MAYBE I GOT THE  
WRONG ADDRESS!



WELL, WHATEVER WENT WRONG, IT'S TOO  
BAD! MODELLING PAYS GOOD WAGES, AND  
I SURE COULD HAVE USED THE MONEY!



GOSH! I  
JUST NEVER  
HAVE ANY  
LUCK!



AND SO THE GIRL WALKS INTO THE NIGHT... AND  
AWAY FROM A NIGHTMARE SHE WILL NEVER  
REMEMBER! AS FOR LUTHER BENEDICT... WE  
NEEDN'T FEEL SORRY FOR HIM!



AFTER ALL, LUTHER HAD WANTED TO CREATE  
THE WORLD'S GREATEST, MOST REALISTIC  
STATUE--AND HE DID! OF COURSE, HE'LL NEVER  
BE ABLE TO APPRECIATE IT! BUT THEN A MAN  
CAN'T HAVE EVERYTHING, CAN HE???

*The End!*



# RAVEN

CREATING CONFUSION AND  
CHAOS... COMES THE  
PROPHET! HARBINGER  
OF DISASTER, SEER OF  
CRISIS, DELIVERER OF  
DOOM!

## DARKLY SEES THE PROPHET!



A TALE TASTERFULLY  
TOLD BY THE TOAST  
OF THE TOWN—  
GIL KANE



A WARM, SPRING AFTERNOON AND LOST IN LINE FORMIDLY PAYS BY A DARK, MALIGNANT FIGURE SPREADING A VIRUS OF TUR MOIL...

HEAR ME CME AND ALL I WE ARE BEING DELIVERED INTO THE HANDS OF OUR ENEMY! WE CAN DEPEND ONLY ON OURSELVES!

WE ARE BEING SOLD LIES TO COVER INCOMPETENCE!



EVEN NOW IN DARK CROWDS, OUR LIVES, OUR FREEDOM ARE BEING PARTERED AWAY!

I HAVE SEEN AND I HAVE HEARD THE CORDENCY AMONGST US!

I HAVE LOOKED INTO DARKNESS AND SEEN DISASTER!



CORRUPT FORCES WILL DESTROY OUR GREATEST MISSILE BASE TOMORROW! I HAVE SEEN AND NOW I HAVE SPOKEN! HEED THE PROPHECY!

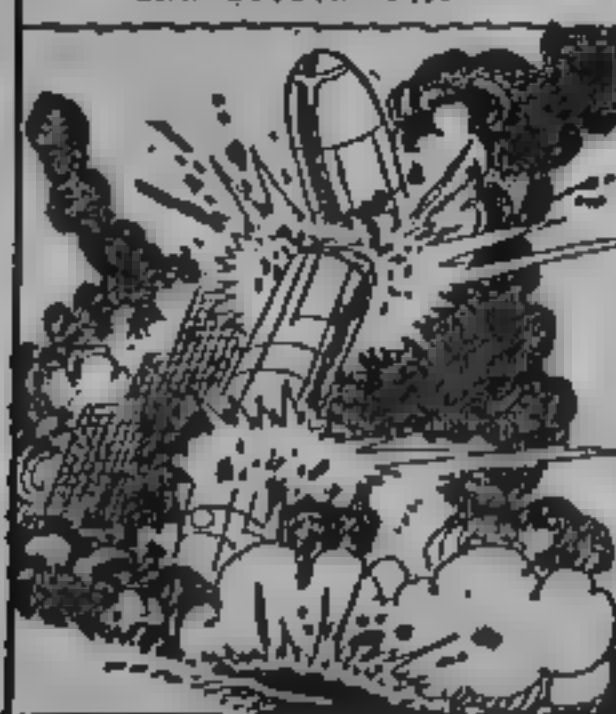
THE OMINOUS FIGURE DESCENDS FROM HIS PERCH AND MOVES PAST THE UNSETTLED CROWD...



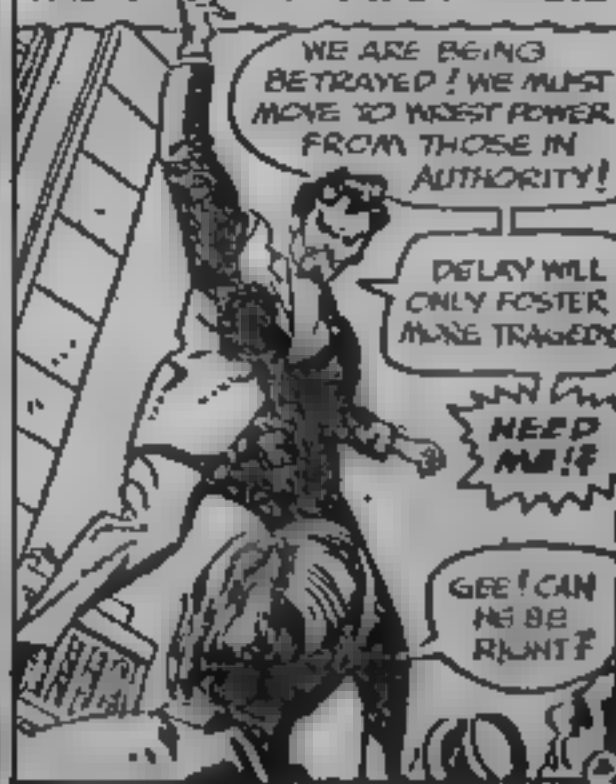
HE'S SPOOKY! BEEN MAKING PREDICTIONS NOW FOR WEEKS AND THEY SEEM TO COME TRUE!

I WONDER IF THERE ISN'T SOMETHING IN WHAT HE SAYS!

THE NEXT DAY, AN ENORMOUS BLAST TEARS THROUGH THE ALBEMARR MISSILE BASE, DESTROYING FIRST LINE DEFENSES...



A CLOUD OF DISSENSION SPREADS AND IS FED BY THE PROPHECY.



WE ARE BEING BETRAYED! WE MUST MOVE TO wrest power FROM THOSE IN AUTHORITY!

DELAY WILL ONLY FOSTER MORE TRAGEDY!

HEED ME!

GEE! CAN HE BE RIGHT?

THE COUNTRY IS OVERTAKEN BY CATASTROPHE...

OVER IT ALL, LOOMS THE PROPHECY...  
HARRASSING, CHARGING, CON-  
DEMNING, INSTIGATING REACTION...

OUR NEWEST WEAPONS  
ARE DESTROYED IN  
FLIGHT... MILITARY  
INSTALLATIONS AND  
GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS  
ERUPT DESTRUCTIVELY...

HIS DARK PROPHECIES GAIN HIM NATIONWIDE NOTORIETY...

GOOD EVENING. THIS IS SCOTT EDWARD WITH  
THE NEWS. TONIGHT, WE HAVE A GUEST WHO HAS  
RISEN TO NATIONAL PROMINENCE WITH HIS  
OR--PREDICTIONS.

MAY I PRESENT...

...THE  
PROPHET!

WILL YOU TELL US WHAT YOU  
FORESEE FOR THE NATION IN  
THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE, SIR?

I SEE BETRAYAL, DECEPTION...  
DESTRUCTION OF OUR LIBERTIES  
BY THOSE WHOM WE ENTRUSTED  
WITH OUR SAFETY...

THEY IMPERIL EVEN NOW  
OUR MOST DEDICATED  
OFFICIAL!

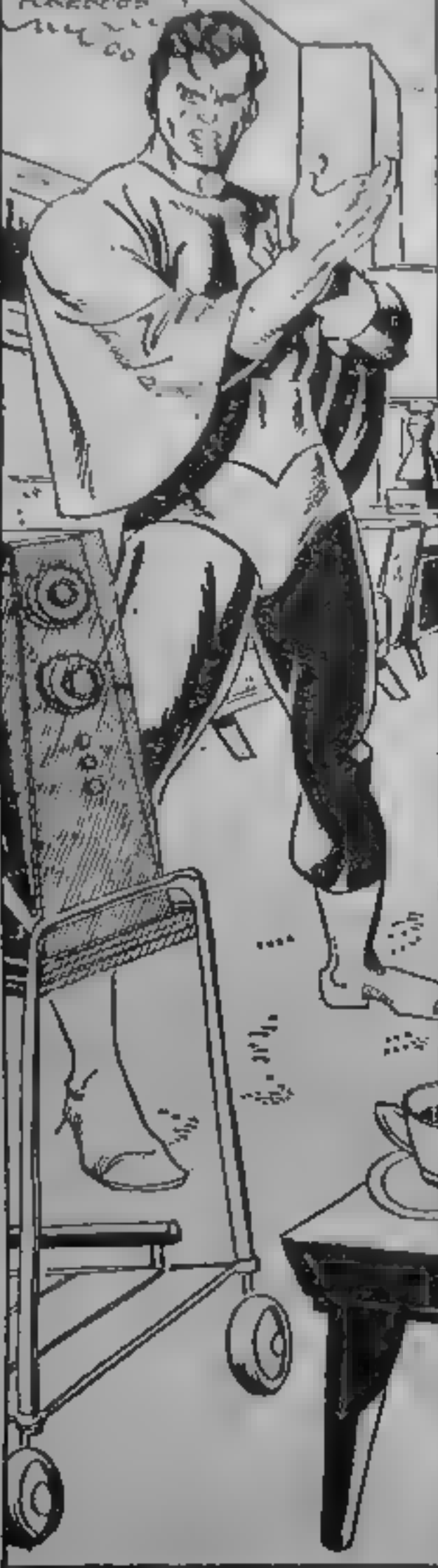
I SEE RUIN AND DESPAIR...  
IT BEGINS FOR A NEW  
BEGINNING ON THE  
ASHES OF THE OLD...

I SEE A NEW  
ORDER FOR  
ALL!

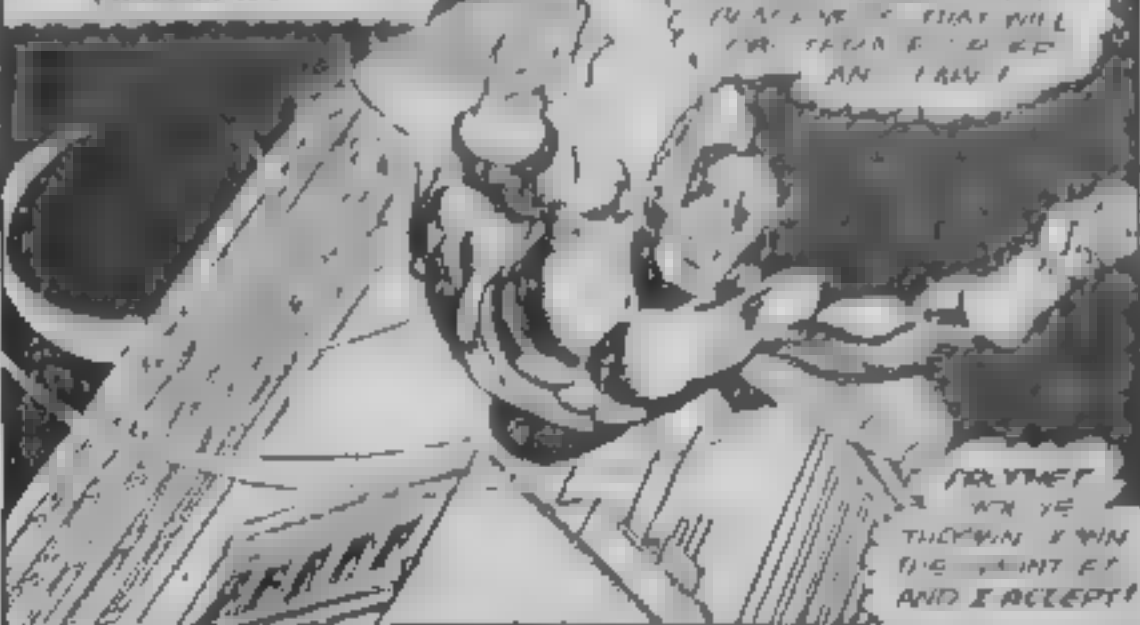


WATCHING THE TV SHOW IN HIS APARTMENT, IS THE RAVEN... CONCERN ABOUT HIS FINE HAIR.

THE PROPHECY HAS GOT THE RAVEN ON THE EDGE OF DRIVING HIM MAD. HE'S INVOLVED WITH THE SARA AND HE FEELS...



THE RAVEN... AND THE RAVEN... THE RAVEN... THE RAVEN...



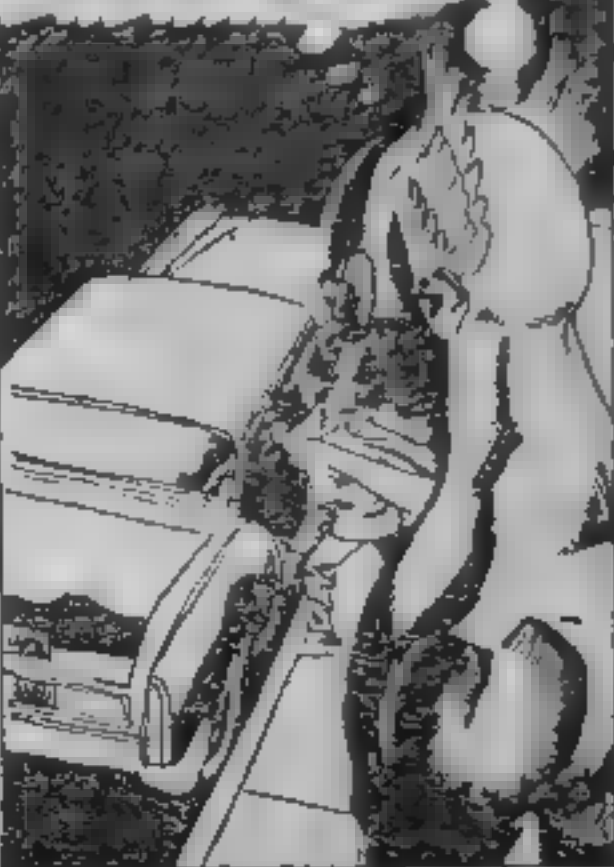
THAT THE RAVEN... THE RAVEN... THE RAVEN... THE RAVEN...

THE RAVEN... THE RAVEN... THE RAVEN... THE RAVEN...

ATOP AN OUTCROPPING ON THE TV STATION, RAVEN WATCHES THE DEPARTING PROPHECY...



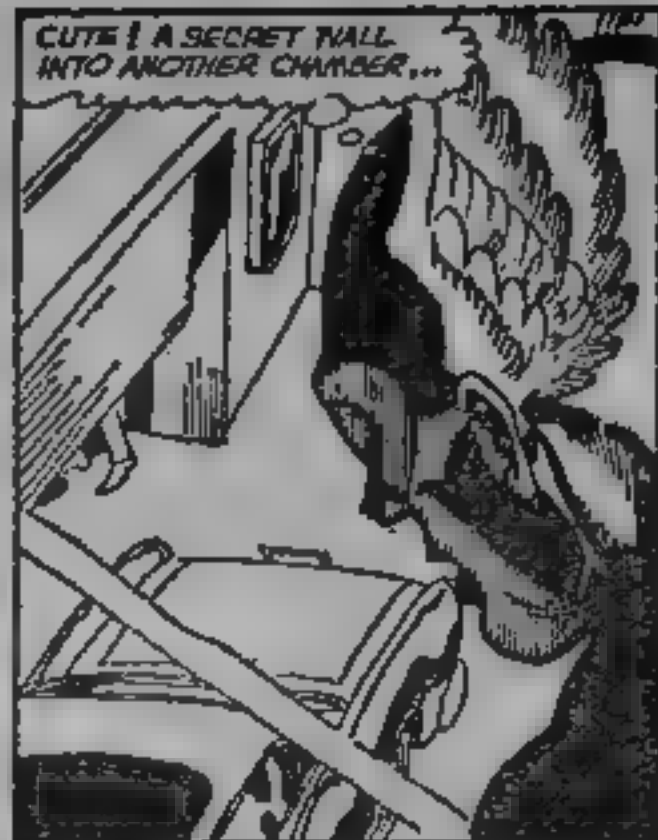
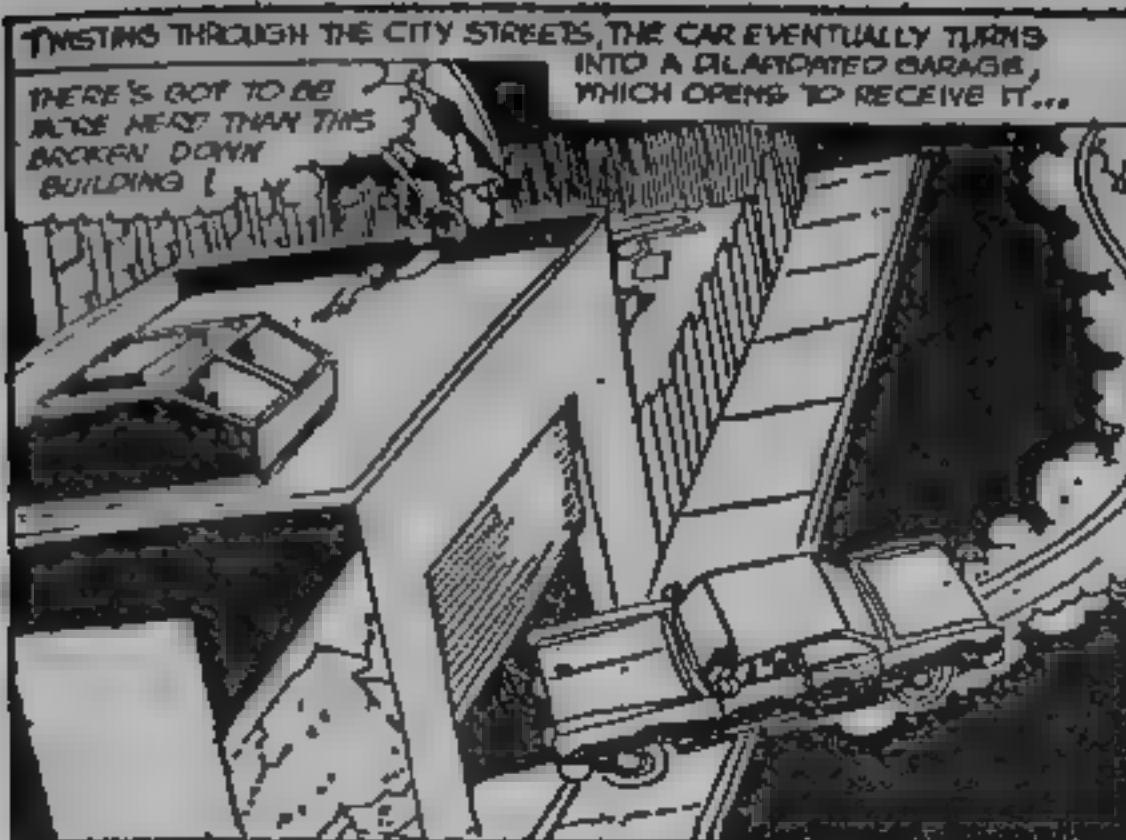
HE'S GETTING INTO THAT CAR... HE'S GOT TO BE THE KEY... MUST KEEP HIM IN SIGHT.



SPEEDING TO ITS DESTINATION A SUPPLE, POWERFUL FIGURE IN PURSUIT, GOES THE HIGH-POWERED CAR...



GO, BABY, GO...











HE'S DESTROYING EVERYTHING... I MUST GET AWAY  
THERE'LL BE TIME TO REEVALUATE AND PLAN THEN



AND I'M GOING HOME... I'M GOING HOME... CARRYING THE  
CLEANLY PROPHET

THE PROPHET  
WILL BE MY  
THE PROPHET  
WILL BE MY  
THE PROPHET  
WILL BE MY

THE PROPHET  
WILL BE MY  
THE PROPHET  
WILL BE MY  
THE PROPHET  
WILL BE MY

IF I CAN'T DEAL I SEE  
INTO THE FUTURE THAT  
I CAN'T DO MYSELF OR  
RAVEN

WAIT...  
I'M  
BEGINNING  
TO

SOMETHING IS APPEARING BEFORE ME... A REAL  
PROPHETIC VISION... I MUST SEE IT CLEARLY...  
I MUST...



A CHILLING SCREAM IS HEARD FROM  
THE PROPHET'S THROAT...

I SEE IT  
I REALLY  
SEE IT

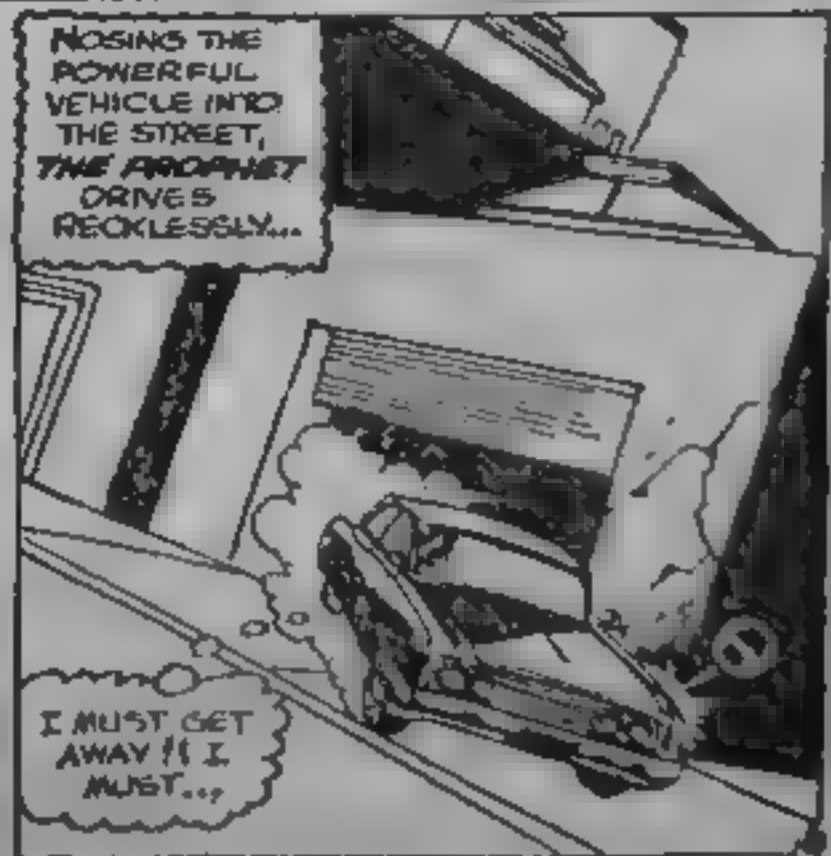


I MUST GET  
AWAY...  
AWAY...!



NOISING THE  
POWERFUL  
VEHICLE INTO  
THE STREET,  
THE PROPHET  
DRIVES  
RECKLESSLY...

I MUST GET  
AWAY!! I  
MUST...



LIKE A DARK ANGEL OF RETRIBUTION, RAVEN SPEEDS IN PURSUIT OF THE DESPERATE SEER...

YOO HOO... PROPHET...  
YOO HOO...

I WAS BEGINNING  
TO THINK YOU DIDN'T  
LIKE ME...



...AND I GUESS I WAS RIGHT!

...WAS IT SOMETHING  
I SAID...? DID MY  
DEODORANT STOP  
WORKING?

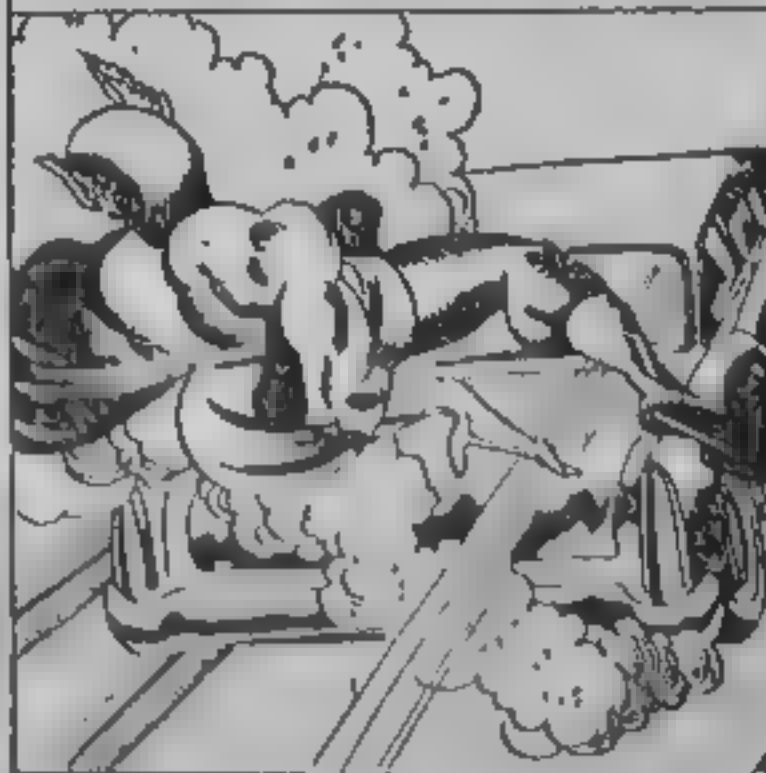


PUSHING THE CAR TO ITS  
LIMITS, THE PROPHET  
CAREENS ALONG THE  
CITY STREETS...



HE'S ALMOST  
LIT ON ME!  
THE TEAR GAS  
BLINDS... I  
ALMOST  
FLIPPED. IT'S  
EXT TO  
WORK!!

THE PROPHET RELEASES A STINGING TEAR  
GAS SCREEN WHICH RAVEN FLIES INTO AND  
IS MOMENTARILY BLINDED BY THE FLAMES...





IT WORKED! IT WORKED!  
I'M SAFE AFTER ALL!



WITH HIS ATTENTION FOCUSED BEHIND HIM, THE PROPHET'S  
CAR TUMBLES A CLIFF AND SMASHES ITSELF TO BITS...



RAVEN ARRIVES SECONDS LATER, AND HAULS  
THE BROKEN BODY OF THE PROPHET OUT OF  
THE BURNING WRECKAGE...



I COULDN'T GET AWAY...  
I COULDN'T... MY  
PROPHECY WAS  
TRUE...

WHAT ARE  
YOU  
TALKING  
ABOUT?

FOR THE FIRST TIME I ACTUALLY SAW INTO  
THE FUTURE...AND WHAT I SAW WAS YOU...  
AND DEATH!



MY  
DEATH!

I...I WAS SO  
CLOSE TO  
VICTORY. AND  
THEN...SAW  
MY INESCAPABLE  
DEFEAT!

YOU WERE A CREATURE OF THE  
DARKNESS, FEEDING ON FEAR  
AND ANXIETY! YOU  
WERE YOUR OWN  
FINAL VICTIM!



THE INSTITUTIONS OF FREE GOVERNMENT  
MUST BE JEALOUSLY GUARDED. PANIC  
SERVES ONLY THE ENEMY. REASON AND  
TRUTH ARE THE DANCING FLAMES  
OF LIBERTY'S TORCH!



# SECRET AGENT X-9

AND THE KEY TO POWER

BY AL WILLIAMSON & ARCHIE GOODWIN



PALACE OF  
FORTUNE AHEAD...  
MACAO'S BIGGEST  
GAMBLING  
HOUSE!

DEEP WITHIN THE GAMBLING HOUSE, FAR REMOVED FROM ITS PATRONS A CLOSED CIRCUIT TV BROADCAST IS IN PROGRESS...



...CODE DESIGNATION:  
X-9, GOES BY THE NAME  
OF PHIL DEXTER. THE 'X'  
SIGNIFIES AN ELITE  
RATING IN THE U.S.A.'S  
ESPIONAGE RANKS,  
THE '9' IS HIS  
OPERATIVE  
NUMBER...

...FEW QUALIFY FOR THIS RATING. THOSE WHO DO ARE MASTERS AT KARATE, JUDO, AIK DO, ATE-WAZA... ANY FORM OF PERSONAL COMBAT...



...THEY ARE THOROUGHLY TRAINED IN EVERY TYPE OF WEAPONRY, FROM THE MOST BASIC AND PRIMITIVE TO THE LATEST EXPERIMENTAL CREATIONS...

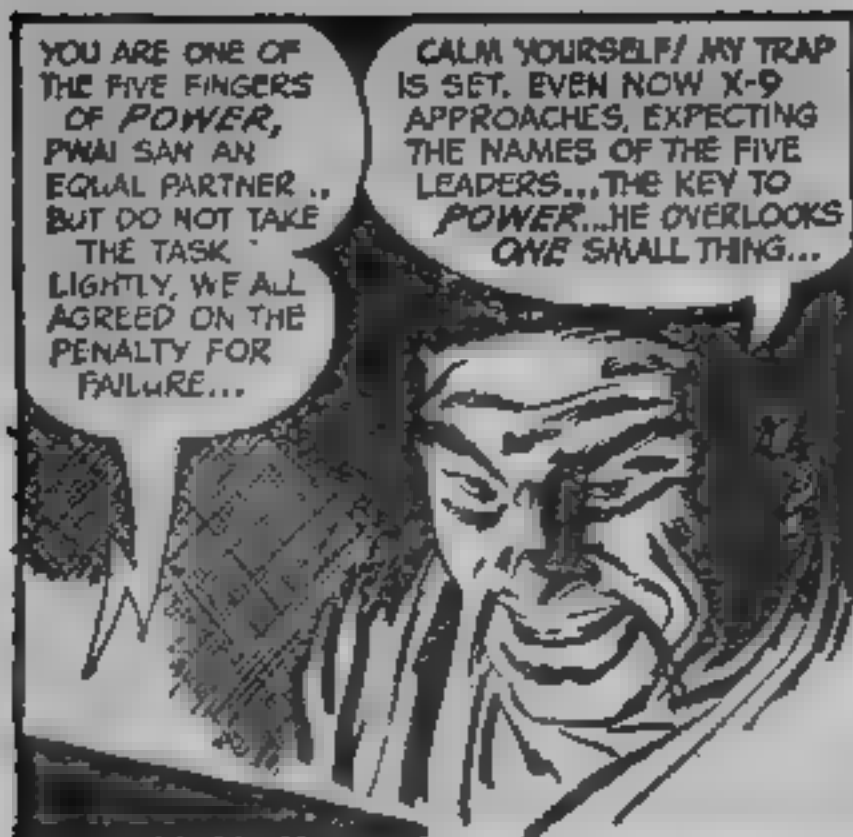


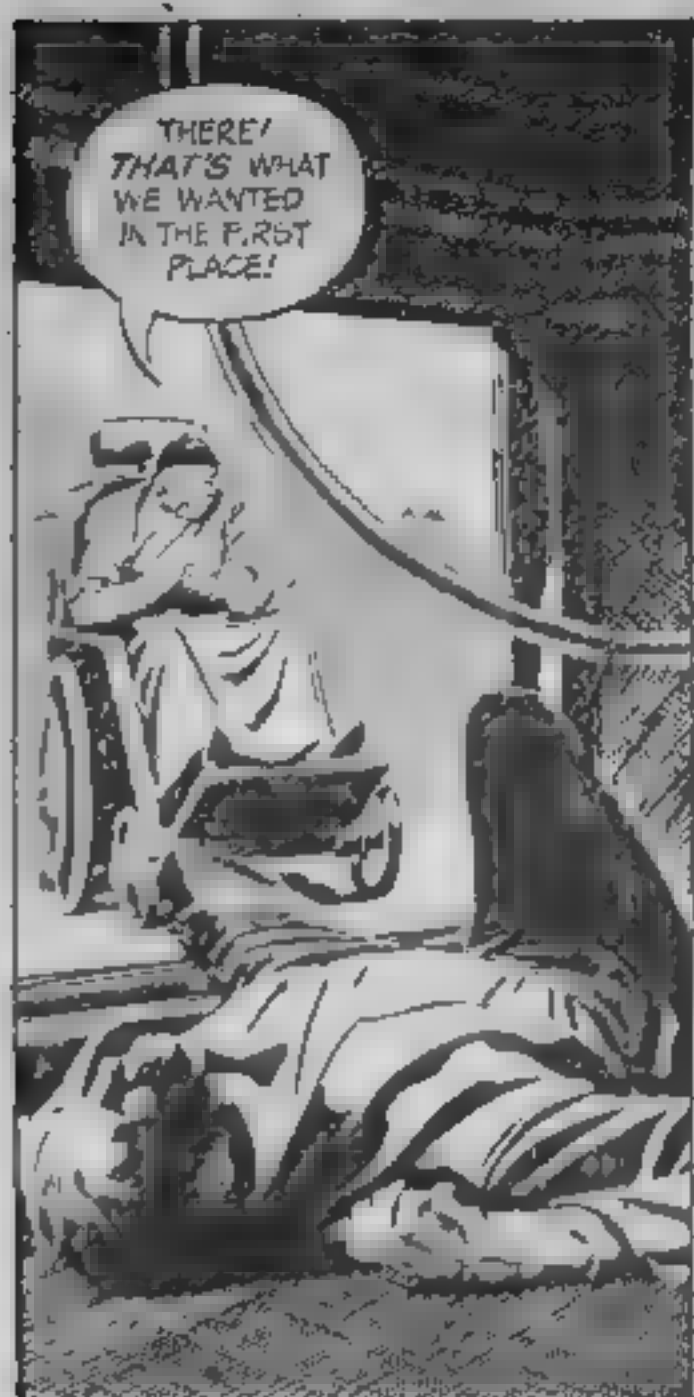
...THIS MAN HAS  
INTERFERED WITH OUR  
OPERATIONS MANY  
TIMES, MR. PWAI, DO  
NOT UNDERESTIMATE  
HIM. HE'S A  
FORMIDABLE  
OPPONENT...



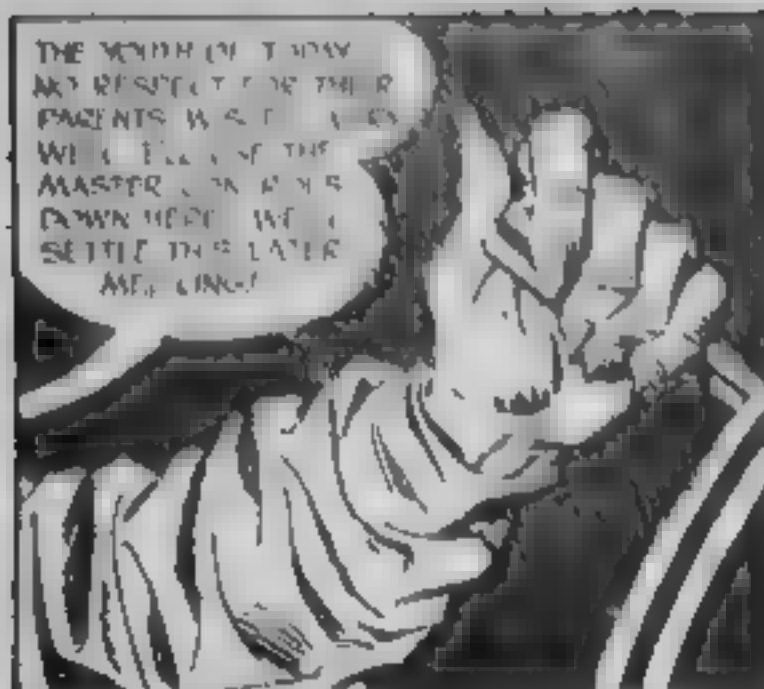
EXCELLENT!  
THANKS SO MUCH FOR  
ASSISTANCE IN  
DESTROYING AN  
OBSTACLE TO MY  
PLAN!













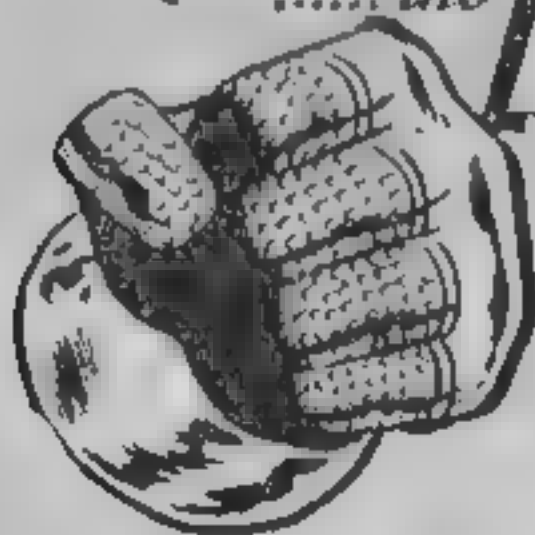
LATER, ON A JET LEAVING HONG KONG...





FROM OUT OF NOWHERE IT CAME THROWING A SHADOW OF FEAR OVER THE UNITED NATIONS COMPLEX ON MANHATTAN'S EAST SHORE AND EVEN THE COMBINED POWERS OF THE THUNDER AGENTS SEEM FEEBLE AGAINST.....

# .....the **FIST of ZEUS**



WHERE DID IT COME FROM?!

NO ONE KNOWS! RADAR PICKED IT UP JUST ABOUT WHERE IT SITS!



FROM THE GIANT HAND, A GHOSTLY BUT POWERFUL VOICE BLARES...

ZEUS COMMANDS THE IMMEDIATE EVACUATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS! OUR FORCES WILL OCCUPY THE BUILDINGS AS SOON AS THIS IS ACCOMPLISHED!





THE GUESS PROVES ACCURATE, FOR AS SOON AS THE MYSTERIOUS U.F.O. HAS GAINED A POSITION DIRECTLY OVER THE WILLIAMSBURG BRIDGE, JUST A FEW MILES SOUTH....

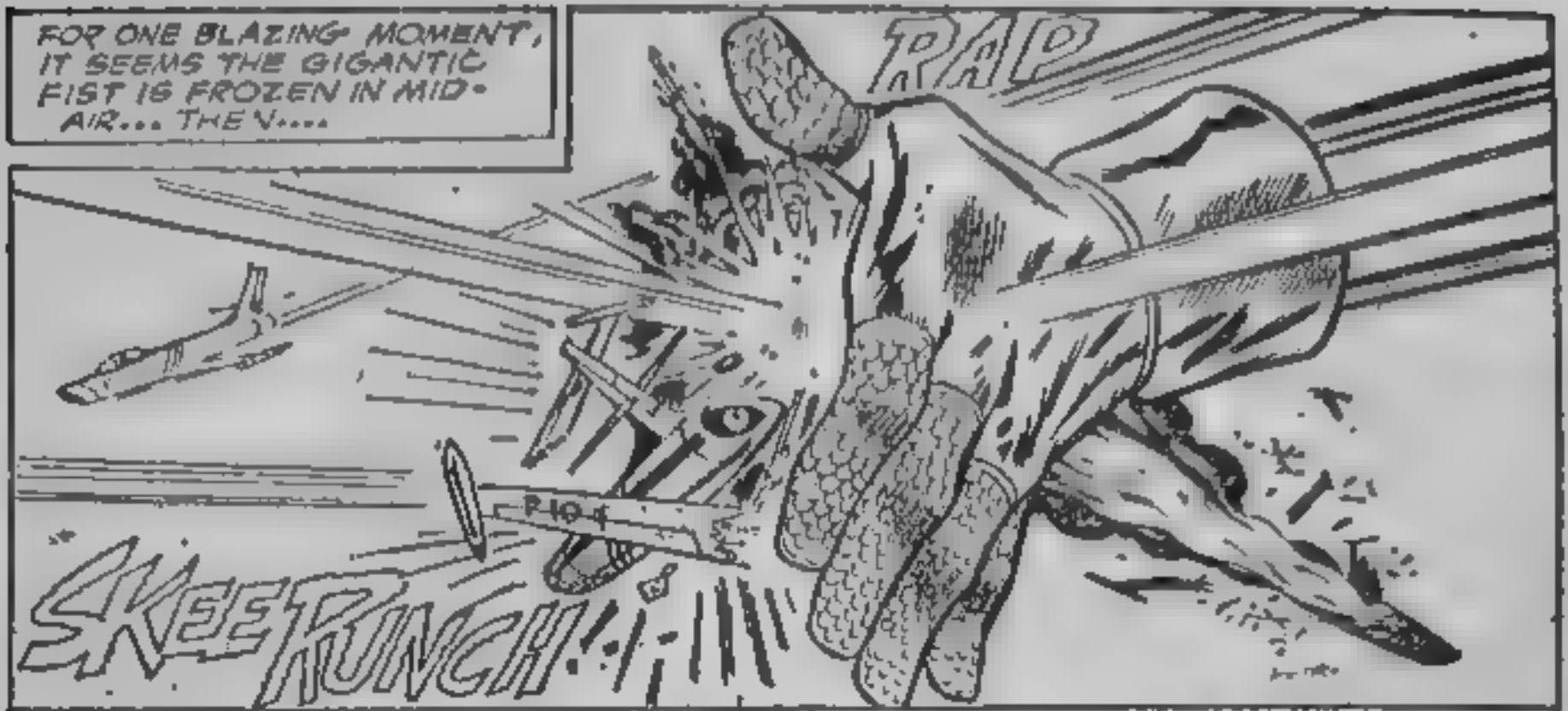


ALREADY A SQUADRON OF U.S. JETS IS IN THE AIR....





FOR ONE BLAZING MOMENT,  
IT SEEMS THE GIGANTIC  
FIST IS FROZEN IN MID-  
AIR... THEN...



IF ANYONE CAN TELL  
US WHAT WE'RE UP  
AGAINST, IT'S  
YOU, NOMAN!



IT COULD BE A FORM  
OF AIRCRAFT,  
BUT I'D HAVE TO  
GET A CLOSER  
LOOK!



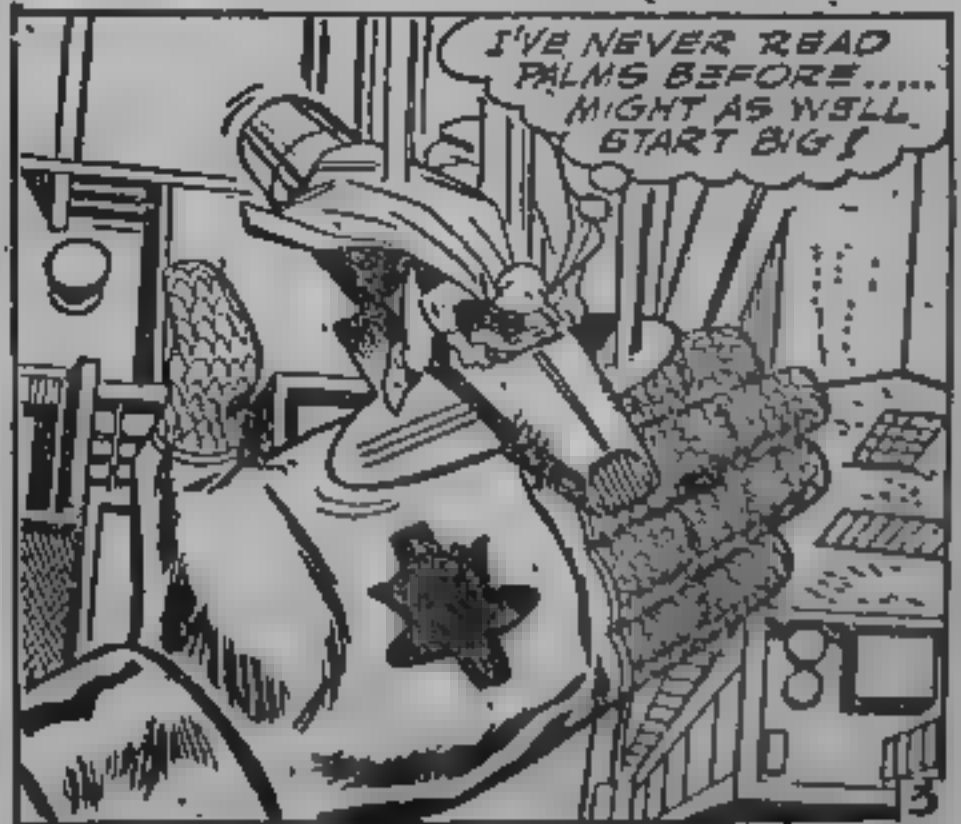
THAT CAN BE  
ARRANGED!

HAVE ANOTHER OF MY ANDROIDS  
DELIVERED HERE RIGHT AWAY...

JUST IN CASE...



I'VE NEVER READ  
PALMS BEFORE...  
MIGHT AS WELL  
START BIG!







FROM THE SKY, ANOTHER OMINOUS  
THREAT RUMBLES THROUGHOUT THE  
CITY LIKE A CLAP OF THUNDER!

EVACUATE IMMEDIATELY OR  
I'LL DESTROY THE  
EMPIRE STATE BUILDING!

IS THAT  
POSSIBLE??

IT'S BEGINNING TO  
LOOK THAT WAY!

MY TURN! DYNAMO AND I HAVE  
WORKED OUT A PLAN THAT **SHOULD**  
PULL IT DOWN...

IF I CAN JUST  
GET THIS CABLE  
AROUND IT!

LIKE A DARTING SPIDER, RAVEN SPINS  
A WEB OF STEEL AROUND THE  
GIANT PAW IN THE SKY!

I HOPE DYNAMO  
HAS A GOOD GRIP ON  
THE OTHER END  
OF THE LINE!

A THOUSAND FEET BELOW DYNAMO BRACES HIMSELF FOR A TITANIC TUG OF WAR!



NOMAN TRANSFERS FROM ANDROID TO ANDROID TO KEEP UP TO THE MINUTE ON THE OPERATION...

AND MAYBE NOT?... THAT FLYING FORTRESS IS INCREDIBLY POWERFUL...

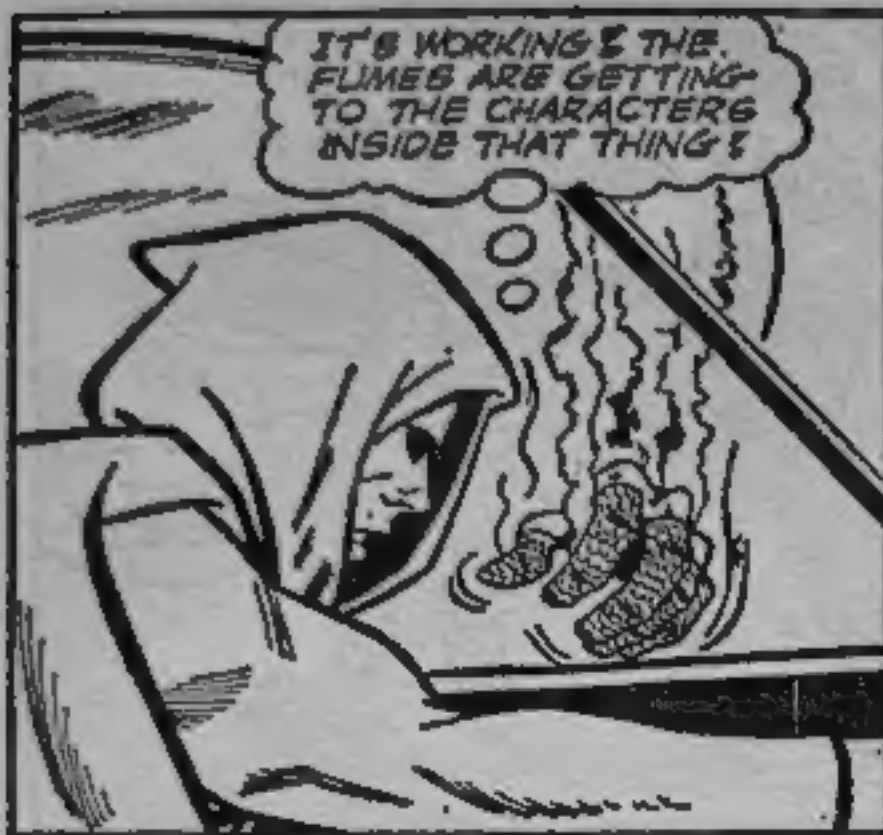


STRENGTH STILL COUNTS FOR PLENTY, AS A TIGHTLY TRUSSED FIST IS ABOUT TO PROVE!







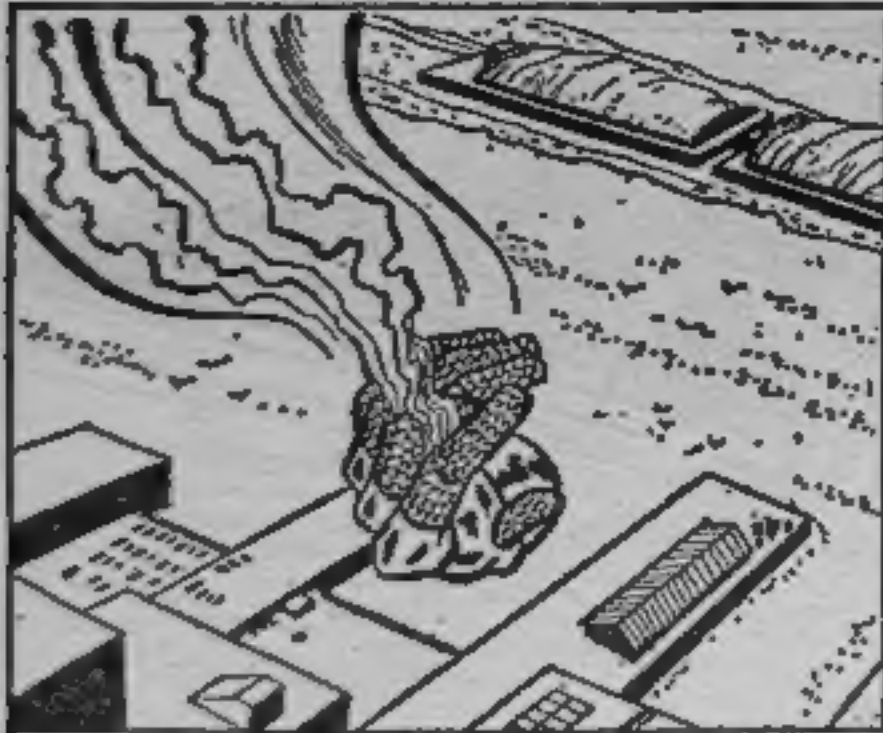


IT'S WORKING! THE  
FUMES ARE GETTING  
TO THE CHARACTERS  
INSIDE THAT THING!

THE FIST WOBBLER UNCERTAINLY, JABS  
FUTILELY AT NOMAN'S JET...



THEN SPINS IN A SLOW-MOTION DIVE  
TO THE EARTH BELOW!



AS THE DUST SETTLES, SO  
DOES THE DRONE OF A  
HUNDRED HYSTERICAL  
VOICES. A COOL HUSH  
SURROUNDS THE CORPSE  
OF BENT STEEL.



.....LISTEN.....  
CAN YOU HEAR THAT  
WHIRRING?

RRRRRRRR



RRRRRRRRRRRRRR  
GRENCH







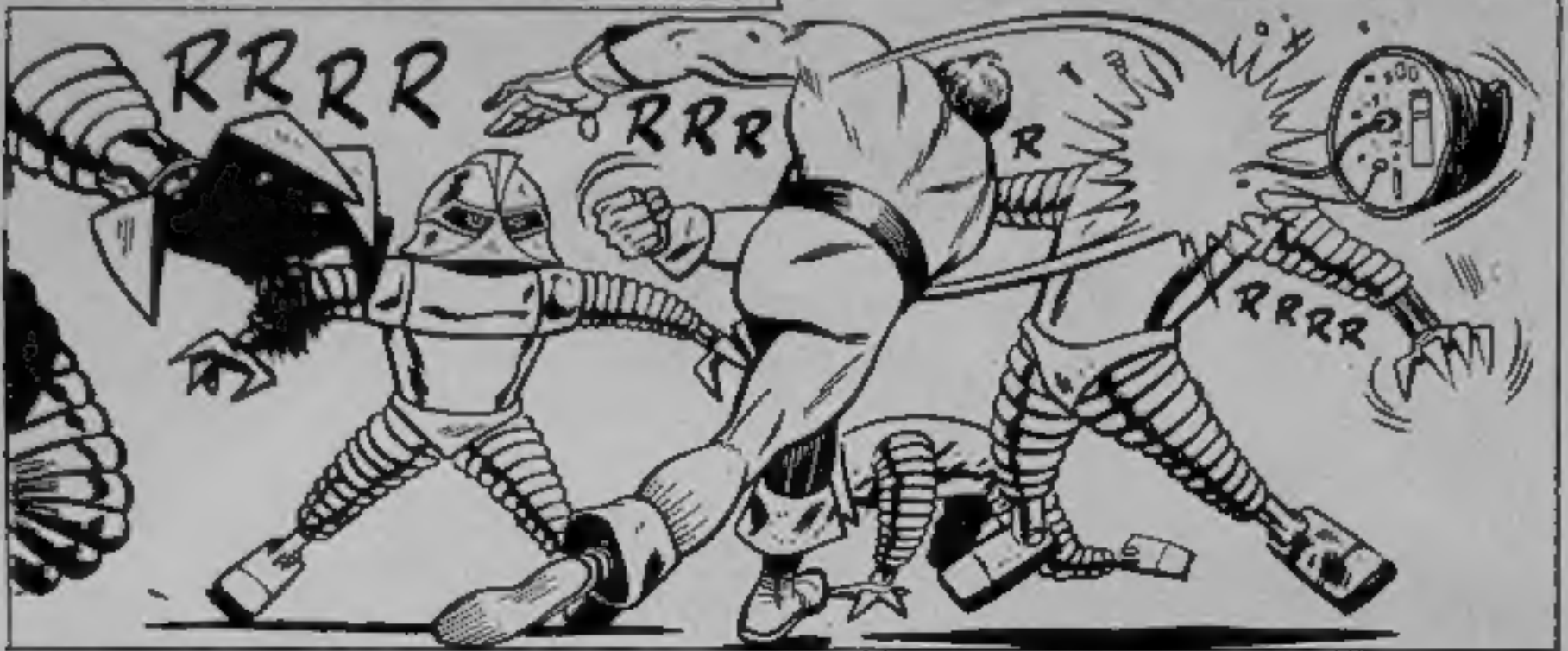
AS DYNAMO WADES INTO THE MOB OF MADDENED ROBOTS...



SPEEDING FASTER THAN THE EYE CAN SEE, LIGHTNING QUICKLY FINDS THE ANSWER!



OUTSIDE, THE BERSERK MACHINES FALL STIFFLY IN GROTESQUE POSTURES, A FROZEN TABLEAU OF VIOLENCE.



END.



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